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Austrian National Socialism and the Anschluss

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AUSTRIAN NATIONAL SOCIALISM AND THE ANSCHLUSS

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INTRODUCTION

The Anschluss of Austria and the greater German Reich is often pinpointed as the beginning of Nazi Germany's attempt for European Hegemony. With the annexation of Austria came an improved strategic position regarding Czechoslovakia, Yugoslovakia, and Hungary, and would provide Hitler with a springboard from which he could launch his thrust into Eastern Europe. The road toward Anschluss was a difficult one to travel: Germany needed to be wary of the threat from the Western Powers during her quest for a greater German Reich, and also had to consider the Austrian domestic situation as she laid plans for a union. In order to successfully complete the Anschluss, Germany and her allies within Austria needed to strike at the precise moment when both the Austrian internal situation and the attitude of the European powers were ripe for exploitation.

While it is possible to view the fall of Austria as an event planned and implemented in full by an insightful Adolf Hitler, scholars are generally in agreement that this was not the case. As Gordon Brook-Shepherd states, "it was at once the most inevitable of his conquests and the most accidental; the best-planned, and the most improvised."[1] Hitler and the German government worked slowly and diligently (and without much success) toward the Anschluss throughout the 1930s; but the events of early 1938 suddenly tipped the scales in favor of the National Socialists and, in less than three months' time, executed a plan for union which had eluded pan-Germanic demands

for decades.

It is difficult to argue against the idea that Hitler was not the only participant in the Anschluss. A.J.P Taylor argues that, "Hitler did not make plans -- for world conquest or for anything else. He assumed that others would provide opportunities, and that he would seize them."[2] At least in the case of Austria, this statement, by itself, is basically correct. Yet in supporting this argument, Taylor makes what I consider to be a gross (but not uncommon) oversight in his review of the sources of opportunities offered to Hitler. Taylor argues that the political leaders of Austria, Great Britain, and Italy were responsible for giving Hitler his opening into Austria.[3] Brook-Shepherd echoes these feelings as well, citing Schuschnigg as the primary reason for allowing Hitler to annex Austria.[4] While Schuschnigg, Mussolini, and Chamberlain certainly were involved in the process, I believe that this interpretation ignores an even greater cause of Anschluss: that of popular support for a union.

The idea for a greater German state was not a foreign one to Austrians in 1938. It was prevalent in the area as far back as 1867, and attracted an Austrian following throughout the 19th century. With the defeat of the Habsburg Monarchy in World War I, the cry for the union of all German speaking sections in the Empire was loud and almost unanimous from all sides of the political and popular spectrum. The roller-coaster economy of the Republic of Austria did little to silence the unhappy voices in the new state, which many felt was something of a bastard nation. The world depression of 1930 hit the country very hard,

and encouraged a good number of economically stricken German-Austrians to join in an Anschluss platform in hopes of creating an improved economic state. By the end of 1932, one of the major proponents of an Anschluss was the Austrian Nazi party, which was making sizeable gains in the country.

With the success of Hitler in the Reich came an increase in the popularity of National Socialism and the Anschluss idea in Austria. The turbulence of the era produced an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the Austrian government, much to the dismay of Hitler (who had not been entirely against the plan) and the German Foreign Ministry (which had warned the upper echelons of the futility of a violent putsch in Vienna). As a consequence of this failure, Hitler was forced to change his "plans" for Austrian Anschluss, just as he had changed his "plans" for assuming power after the failure of the Munich Putsch of 1923. Rather than pursuing a revolutionary (i.e. illegal) assumption of power, German foreign policy pursued an evolutionary (i.e. legal) process, aiming at winning power through diplomacy and "inside men" (such as Arthur Seyss-Inquart). This new thrust of German foreign policy toward Austria, however, did not take into account the actions of the Austrian National Socialists. While Hitler bided his time, these Nazis sought to secure a Nazi state through terror tactics and violence. These two policies each pushed toward the same goal, but in different ways. From 1934 to 1938, both diplomacy and terror were used to reach one common goal: Anschluss.

In my estimation, the presence and threat of the Austrian National Socialist party was the determining factor in the

National Socialist party was the determining factor in the success of the union. While it is true that Schuschnigg and Chamberlain helped open the door for German expansion, the actions taken by these men hinged upon the internal situation in the Republic of Austria. Without a popular movement inside the state, the legitimacy of a German move toward annexation would not have existed, thus denying Hitler the diplomatic excuse that union was desired by both Germans and Austrians. Moreover, the threat of insurrection and revolt within Austria forced Schuschnigg to approach Hitler for help, and thus into the Lion's den. While the Austrian Chancellor did move toward a dangerous position, he was moved there for a reason; the presence of the Nazi party in Austria.

The Anschluss was successful in 1938 because of its broad range of support. The movement had begun in Austria during the 19th century, and its public appeal had greatly increased with the fall of the Empire. With the success of the German National Socialists came a larger Austrian following. The combination of Austrian Nazis and German foreign policy helped bring about the end of an independent Austrian state. While it is correct to say that the actual Anschluss was both planned and improvised, and that outside forces were influencial in the process of union, it is vital to give equal time to the National Socialists in Austria for their part in the action. The improvisation of the act of Anschluss was due primarily to the internal chaos caused by the Austrian Nazi party, which not only gave Hitler a legitimate excuse for Anschluss, but which also pressured Schuschnigg into taking actions detrimental to the independence of the Republic of

Austria.

NOTES

1. Brook-Shepherd, Gordon; The Anschluss; pg. xiv (forward).
2. Taylor, A.J.P; The Origins of the Second World War; pg. 131
3. Ibid; pg. 132-140.
4. Brook-Shepherd; pg. xiv.

1

EARLY NATIONALISM

In order to fully appreciate the complexities involved in the relationship between Austria and Germany during the Anschluss crisis, it is necessary to trace the origins of the movement for the unification of the two states. Without a brief political, social, and economic background of the Austrian attitude toward Anschluss, the events and emotions of early 1938 are almost beyond comprehension. The enthusiasm exhibited by the Austrians as the German Reich assumed control of the country was entirely genuine. Few tears were shed as the government shifted from the hands of Schuschnigg to Seyss-Inquart, and then to Adolf Hitler. Austrian National Socialism had been in existence a long time before Adolf Hitler caught on to the ideology, and remained a separate entity from the German party until after the Treaty of Versailles. When the Wehrmacht drove through the streets of Vienna in 1938, Austrians were at least somewhat aware of the political intentions of the Nazi regime.

The Anschluss idea was not a new concept to Austrians in March of 1938. It had long been an issue among Austrians of German dissent, beginning as far back as 1867, when the Habsburg Empire, stung by defeat at the hands of Bismarckian Prussia, reformed itself with a new constitution. The move toward liberalism had gained increasing strength during the previous two decades, as had been made quite clear by the wave of revolts throughout Europe in 1848-49. As in other states, the Habsburgs had encountered a revolt of their own in Vienna during this rash

of rebellion. While the revolt failed to topple the autocratic empire the point had been made that not all was well in Austria. With the constitution of 1867, the Empire became a dual-state, taking the name Austria-Hungary. Because of the ethnic composition of the country (which was inhabited by Germans, Czechs, Slavs, and, if one wishes to include them as a nationality, Jews), this semi-split only helped fuel the nationalist feelings within each of the ethnic groups in the state. As a result, many of the members of these ethnic groups began behaving more as members of their nationalist group than as members of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[1] The Czech majority in Bohemia, seeing section 19 of the constitution (which proclaimed liberty and equality for all nationalities), quickly argued that due to their lack of government jobs, Czech schools, and government subsidies to Czech theaters and museums, the Czech majority was, in fact, being discriminated against. The German minority in Bohemia, which paid most of the taxes in the province, did not want to be forced to finance a culture that was not their own. While the Czechs demanded that Bohemia be a Czech administrative unit, the Germans supported a partition of the area and a creation of a "Deutsch-Boehmen".[2] The Germans in Styria and Carniola, meanwhile, pressed for the detachment of certain Slav areas in Austria in order to make them fully German-speaking.[3] Tempers flared when, in 1897, the Badeni Language Ordinances were passed by the Government.[4] This legislation made Czech the formal language in the administrative sphere of Bohemia. The Badeni dispute, as well as others, divided the two nationalities throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The animosities created by the language and cultural disputes of the late 19th centuries were fanned by the growth of the Austro-Hungarian economy. With the rise of the Empire's industrial capabilities came increased tensions in Austria. Because of the massive production of goods in urban areas, many rural dwellers moved to cities to work and make money. As a result, the number of large cities (those with populations over 10,000) in Austria-Hungary quadrupled between 1850 and 1900.[5] Massive migrations occurred within the Empire, and, much to the chagrin of German workers, most of the migrants happened to be Czechs from rural regions.[6] To the German industrial worker, the Czechs presented not only a threat to the German-ness of the area; they were also in competition for jobs. Because the Czech farmer was used to surviving on a much lower standard of living in the countryside than the German was used to in the city, employers found that the new Czech workforce was a much less expensive one than the German workforce.[7] Hence, Germans began to feel that they were in danger of losing not only their German heritage, but also their jobs in the Austrian industrial sector. Because of the increase of both productivity and a labor force, this period (1870 to 1900) saw various trade unions begin to appear throughout the Empire. Yet the Marxist-Socialist unions which began operating in the latter third of the 19th century soon ran into the problem of nationalist animosities. The German union members resented job competition from the Czechs. The Czechs, seeing that the union leaders were primarily Germans, suspected a discriminatory attitude from the union.[8] In 1896,

the Czechs withdrew from the Marxist union to form its own Czecho-Slav union.[9] The German workers in Austria-Hungary were soon to follow suit. In 1904, the German Workers Party (Deutsche Arbeiterspartei - DAP) was created in order to fulfill the needs of the German laborer in the Empire. The platform rested on nationalist and socialist principles: liberation of the German workers from economic, political, and cultural oppression; disregard for the internationalism of Marxist theory due to its lack of protection for German interests in an economically competitive market; and the improvement of economic and social conditions, possible only through the use of trade-union organizations. The latter of these three planks was the most important for the DAP: the platform declared that, "The economic and political organization of achieving this end (trade unions) is the purpose of the DAP."[10] By 1904, German-Austrian workers had begun to organize economic groups which could fight the influx of Czechs in their living and working areas. At the same time, political groups began to form in German areas which went hand-in-hand with this nationalist and socialist approach.

The Growth of Pan-Germanism in Austria

The growth of German workers' parties was paralled in the 19th century by the growth of pan-Germanic sentiments in Austria. Throughout the century, the main proponents of nationalist feelings came from university students in Lower Austria and Vienna. Nationalist incidents occurred as early as 1875, when violent demonstrations were held in Graz by students of the university, espousing German nationalist claims, while shouting

down Austrian patriotic displays during a meeting of German scientists.[11] Student demonstrations in this vein continued throughout the 1880s and '90s, often led by the wealthy Viennese anti-Semite Georg Ritter von Schoenerer, who served as the spiritual leader of the pan-Germanic nationalists until the early 20th century. Schoenerer spoke of an Anschluss with the greater Reich, proclaiming that, "We German-Austrians must never lose sight of our goal, a reunification, i.e. a very close alliance with, Germany."[12]

In 1885, Schoenerer asked for his supporters to demonstrate their feelings concerning his stand on German-Austrian issues. This request was answered with over 3,000 letters of encouragement from admirers all over the country.[13] A quarter of these letters came from agrarian workers, while another 20% were written by local councillors, mayors, or village officials.[14] Karl Lueger, who would become one of Vienna's most popular mayors at the turn of the century, was an early follower of Schoenerer, and carried nationalist and anti-Semitic principles with him into office. Students, disillusioned with the Empire, comprised most of this show of strength. Support for nationalist and fascist movements in Austria never really died. As F.L. Carsten has astutely observed, the student supporters of Georg Schoenerer during the 1880s and '90s were to become the middle-aged supporters of Adolf Hitler in the 1930s.[15]

During the mid-1880s, Schoenerer formed the Verband der Deutschnationalen, a small pan-Germanic party.[16] Complete with newspapers and magazines, the Verband began to reach out to an audience of perhaps a few thousand.[17] By 1899, enough German

nationalists had been organized to come up with a platform of nationalist ideas. In a 25 point program, a nationalist convention in Eger agreed that the national wealth of the Empire should be distributed to the workers of Austria-Hungary. The rights of the worker to receive good wages, to organize, to bargain collectively, and to collect disability and unemoployment insurance could not be impeded. Moreover, unskilled laborers (Czechs) could not take jobs away from skilled workers (Germans).[18] These nationalists were in favor of socialism, but against the internationalism espoused by Marxist thought.

As the Verband was taking shape, Schoenerer, the ideological and inspirational leader of the nationalists, was recieving financial support from pan-Germanic groups in both Germany and Switzerland, mostly because of his "Los Von Rom" campaign. This plan was primarily aimed at austrian Catholics, in an effort to convert them to Protestantism, thereby making Austria an appetizing area for Germany to annex.[19] Protestant parishes in Austria also supplied Schoenerer with money to continue his anti-Catholic, anti-Czech, anti-Semitic, anti-Marxist, anti-Capitalist, and pan-Germanic fight in Austria. Schoenerer was slowly spreading the idea of Anschluss in Austria. While he did not attract a mass of support from the German-Austrians, he was the pioneer in the political push in favor of union with Germany. because of his lack of inspirational leadership, Schoenerer and the Verband never attracted a large following; those who did follow this nationalist group were largely characterized as middle class intellectuals who spent their time bickering over

minute ideological points.[20] Nevertheless, Schoenerer was the father of Austrian nationalism, and the first to capitalize on the feelings of Germans who were not content with the integration of their state.

The DAP, on the other hand, was building a decent constituency in Austria during the first decade of the century. In the elections of 1911, the DAP's popularity in Bohemia increased seven fold from the the elections of 1907, scoring particularly well in cities with large Czech immigrant populations.[21] At this time, a young, energetic extrovert named Walter Riehl joined the DAP, and quickly rose through the party ranks to become one of the three leading figures in the party. His fervent loyalty to the Germans in Bohemia earned him a large following of party members, and accounts for his rise through the DAP hierarchy. Riehl would soon play an important role in the early days of Austrian National Socialism.

The war in Europe, however, cut short the political activity of the DAP during the second decade of the 1900s. With its members and organizational leaders fighting on various fronts, the DAP struggled to stay together.[22] Political activity came to a virtual standstill until the last days of the war, when, in August of 1918, a convention of DAP members in Vienna passed a motion to officially change the name of the DAP to the DNSAP (Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei). Because most of the members of the DAP were National Socialists in the vein of Schoenerer anyway, the party leaders reasoned that by officially including the National Socialists into the party they would not be drastically altering their positions. They were also

confident that they would be able to garner more support, drawing pan-Germans into their fold. As they suspected, the old Schoenerer followers joined ranks with the union of German Nationalist Workers to form an alliance which would, during the next twenty years, carry the banner of the Anschluss throughout Austria.

The roots of pan-Germanism and volkish thought were deeply imbedded in the Austrian political sphere well before the turn of the Twentieth century. The clash of ethnic groups in Austria-Hungary sparked the rise of the nationalists in German-Austria, and helped fuel later movements which would be instrumental in completing the final union between Austria and Germany. While small in scope, pan-Germanic nationalist thought was a legitimate movement before 1918, and introduced the idea of Anschluss to German-Austrian citizens throughout the empire. While most did not immediately follow the pan-Germanic rhetoric of Georg Schoenerer, one can fairly wager that a broad section of the population was aware of the arguments which favored a union. Anschluss thought, therefore, was not reserved solely for the fanatical National Socialists during the 1930s. Indeed, it was present in the 19th century, and helped prepare the future Austrian Republic for its ultimate downfall.

NOTES

1. Luza; Austro-German Relations in the Anschluss Era; pg. 4
2. Whiteside; Austrian National Socialism Before 1918; pg. 14
3. Ibid; pg. 15

4. Abrams; "The Austrian Question at the turn of the 20th Century"; Journal of Central European Affairs; pg. 186
5. Whiteside; pg. 27
6. Ibid; pg. 39; See Rauchberg, Besitzstund; pg. 87-97
7. Whiteside; pg. 1
8. Ibid; pg. 35
9. Ibid; pg. 36
10. Ibid; pg. 88
11. Carsten, F.L.; Fascist Movements in Austria; pg. 11
12. Ibid; pg. 12
13. Ibid; pg. 18
14. Ibid; pg. 18
15. Ibid; pg. 26
16. Whiteside; pg. 55
17. Ibid; pg. 60-61
18. Ibid; pg. 63
19. Abrams; pg. 186
20. Whiteside; pg. 98
21. Ibid; pg. 99
22. Ibid; pg. 105

2

HINTS OF ANSCHLUSS

The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire opened the door for political change within the state. Suddenly, after centuries of authoritarian rule, the nationalist groups in the old regime had a chance to rule themselves, by whatever means they chose. Woodrow Wilson's concept of self-determination had the ring of liberty, equality, and Democracy, all of which had been lacking under the Habsburg Monarchy and during the years of the Holy Roman Empire. Naturally, each ethnic group within the Empire had it own vision of the future. While the Czechs and Hungarians were anxious to build their own states, the German-Austrians found themselves in an interesting situation: they had three choices from which they could decide. The restoration of the Monarchy was always a possibility (and would remain a possibility until 1938), even though the victorious allies were sure to frown upon that idea. Austria could form a Republic of its own, without the aide of the Monarchy, regardless of her lack of agricultural and industrial capabilities. Finally, Austria could conceivably join with greater Germany, and form a more economically viable state. As the treaties of Versailles and St. Germain were being written, however, it became quite clear that the German-Austrian public would have little choice in the matter: their fate would be in the hands of the Allied Forces, particularly France. While the Anschluss option was to be

Germany would grow within the new Republic of Austria with enough vehemence to make its primary supporters, the NSDAP, a force to be reckoned with in the Austrian political sphere.

The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy set the stage for an expression of surprisingly common opinions. As the danger of losing a large chunk of the German population drew near, German-Austrians of all political convictions, left-wing Social Democrats as well as right-wing National Socialists, banded together in Bohemia to protest the incorporation of "Deutsch-Boehmen" into Czechoslovakia.[1] Even Socialist Internationalist Josef Selinger cried of the "'Love of our people.'"[2] Due to the new Socialist government in Germany, the Anschluss movement in early 1919 garnered a good deal of support not only from the pan-Germanic nationalists, but from the Social Democrats in Austria as well. The nationalists, like the Greater-German party (Grossdeutsche Volkspartei - GVP), had always wanted Anschluss as a way of securing their German cultural heritage. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, viewed the Anschluss as an acceptable way of spreading the Marxist ideology, and of strengthening their political position in Austria.[3] As Radomir Luza remarks, "The Austrian Anschluss movement consisted of a fluid group commanding a majority of the population."[4] The Anschluss ideas of Georg von Schoenerer, which had seemed rather obscure to a number of Austrians in 1900, were suddenly reaching a bi-partisan audience that was large in scale. The only real obstacle for the movement to hurdle was that of the Big Four.

Unfortunately, this obstacle was an unsurmountable one.

While Britain and the United States were not adamantly opposed to an Anschluss, the French, led by an embittered Clemenceau, were, "above all determined to weaken Germany, and therefore . . . prevent the union of Germany and Austria."[5] With the signing of the Treaty of St. Germain on September 12, 1919, French wishes were honored. The concept of National Self-Determination seemed to by-pass the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. Austria was not only explicitly forbidden to join with Germany, but she was also partitioned by the Allies, gluing sections of German-Austria onto Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Italy. Both southern Bohemia and southern Moravia, with a combined German population of 357,000 (as opposed to 18,500 Czechs) were added to the new Czechoslovakian state. The predominantly German Drau River valley, in southern Styria, was awarded to Yugoslavia, thus cutting an important rail link between Austria's eastern and western provinces. Worst of all, the culturally important South Tyrol, along with its 225,000 Germans (and only a handful of Italians), was given to Italy, ". . . so that the 38 million Italians could have a strategic frontier against 6.5 million Austrians."[6] As a result of this dissection in the name of self-determination, fully one-third of the old German-Austrian population was under the rule of alien governments.[7]

The Treaty of St. Germain, after slicing off chunks of German-Austria and presenting them to foreign governments, not only diminished the German-Austrian population, but saw to it that what was remaining of Austria could never expand. The Treaty did grant Austria its independence, in the form of a

Republic, but then refused to allow this newly formed sovereign state to pursue its own policies. Article 88 of the Treaty proclaimed that;

> the independence of Austria is inalienable other wise than with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations. Consequently Austria undertakes, in the absence of the consent of the said Council, to abstain from any act which might directly or indirectly or by any means whatever compromise her independence. . .[8]

The Allies had covered their own tracks. They had stripped Austria of her national/cultural cohesiveness by "awarding" provinces and people to various governments. Then, making sure that a powerful Germany could never rise again to threaten the Western Powers, Austria was denied the right to conduct her own foreign policy as she might see fit. An Anschluss was denied, and the slim hopes for the cultural unity of German-Austria was broken.

The prohibition of an Anschluss by the victorious Allies in 1919 only heightened the desires for a union with Germany. As is the case with so many things, the flat denial of the idea simply made its adherents work harder (and with more success) to convert others to the cause. Perhaps the most convincing demonstration of both the dissatisfaction with the Treaty of St. Germain and the desire of Anschluss can be found in the results of local plebiscites held in two Austrian provinces. In April of 1921, 90% of those eligible to vote in the Tyrol, ". . . cast 145,302 ballots in favor of the province's joining Germany whereas only 1,805 opposed the proposition."[9] One month later, a plebiscite in the province of Salzburg confirmed this mandate by voting overwhelmingly in favor of union with Germany. Out of 126,482

possible voters, over 98,000 chose the Anschluss proposal, while a scant 877 voted against it.[10] These plebiscites certainly did not go unnoticed by the leading National Socialists. During his trial in 1946, SS General Ernst Kaltenbrunner tried to justify the eventual Anschluss of 1938 by citing these plebiscites as evidence of the Austrian popular desire for a union with Germany.[11]

Demonstrations and organizations popped up throughout Austria supporting the Anschluss idea. In 1928, a gathering of Anschluss supporters in Vienna numbered over 200,000.[12] Three years earlier, in 1925, the Austro-German Volksbund and the Austro-German Volksgemeinschaft were formed to promote the Anschluss movement. The Volksbund was a mass movement which successfully incorporated members of all Austrian parties into one pro-Anschluss party, while the Volksgemeinschaft aimed at winning the support of intellectuals.[13] To further emphasize this turn toward union, it should be noted that in a 1929 questionnaire given to the members of the Austrian National Assembly, two-thirds of the delegates were in favor of a union with Germany.[14] The Anschluss movement was now spreading into official regions of the state.

To compound the Anschluss problem, the children of Austria were brought into the controversy through the educational system in Austria. Teachers were forced, by government order, to "give equal time to both Austrian and German history."[15] In fact, three of the most popular and widely circulated textbooks in Austrian secondary school espoused an Anschluss, while at the same time "emphasized the uniqueness of Austrian history."[16]

Teachers were encouraged to promote the value of the volk and of the fatherland, which gave a great deal of academic (and propagandistic) freedom to professors.[17] Taking this educational "indoctrinatory" evidence into consideration, it is obvious that by 1930, the pan-Germanic Anschluss movement had reached every corner of the Austrian population: workers, intellectuals, government officials, and even school children were all included in the push toward the union of Austria with Germany.

One of the major indicators of the force of the Anschluss movement at any particular time in Austria was the economic situation coinciding with the period in question. When times were good and the economy was on an upswing, the Anschluss movement would die down a bit. But when times were bad, and the economy of Austria was on a downward spiral, cries of Anschluss became more numerous and had a much higher pitch to them. From 1919, when the Treaty of St. Germanin was being prepared by the Allies, until 1922, when Austria was forced to make a fervent plea to the League of Nations for a large-scale loan, Austrian food production was well below half of its demand. The Austrian crown, 16 of which had equaled one US dollar in 1919, took a three year nosedive. In 1922, one US dollar could buy as many as 83,000 Austrian crowns. Meanwhile, The cost of living increased an unfathomable 2,645 times during this same period.[18]

In light of these facts, it is no coincidence that the 1921 plebiscites in the Tyrol and in Salzburg were overwhelmingly in favor of the Anschluss. When the Austrian government succeeded in securing a L30 million loan from the League of Nations in

October, 1922,[19] it was forced to publicly reaffirm Article 88 of the Treaty of St. Germain, denying its right to unite with Germany. The Geneva Protocal, as this agreement came to be called, and the money given to Austria, did not solve the economic problems in the Republic.[20] Unemployment remained high, seldom dipping below 10% during the 1920s.[21] Seeing the failure of even this gigantic loan to improve the desperate condition of Austria's economy, "It was then natural that Austrians should... be drawn ... to the belief that their economic problems could only be solved through union with Germany."[22] The quick fix notions of these discouraged Austrians would reappear, with an even greater force, in 1930, when the Great Depression brought Austria, as well as the rest of Europe, to its knees.

And yet, when the Austrian currency was changed to the more stable schilling in 1924 and the Austrian economy began to pick up, the Anschluss movement became less important to Austrians who suddenly found themselves economically solvent. As Kaltenbrunner was to say in 1946,

> The starting point (of the move toward National Socialism) was the abnormal economic depression in Austria and beyond that the Anschluss movement, and finally National Socialism made the Anschluss come true. This course, from economic depression via Anschluss movement to National Socialism, was the road of nearly all National Socialists. . .[23]

Economics served as a common denominator for the amount of support the movement received. One should bear this in mind later on, when the decade of the 1930s saw a turn toward an Anschluss mentality.

Austrian National Socialism in the Decade of the 1920s

The DNSAP between 1918 and 1933 experienced a paradoxical decade-and-a-half. While it succeeded in attracting a decent amount of members, it could not establish itself as the leader of the nationalist groups. While it initially succeeded in finding a leader for a short period of time (in the person of Walter Riehl), it soon dissolved into a party of factions until the late 1920s. While the roots of Anschluss thought could be traced back to the National Socialists, they were but one of a number of parties which advocated union with Germany. It was not until the 1930 electoral success of the National Socialists in Germany that the Austrian party was able to substantially capture a large group of members for the organization.

As the Austro-Hungarian Army collapsed in 1918, the members of the old DAP and of the small, scattered National Socialist groups throughout German areas of the Empire returned to their homes to begin the fight for their own national self-determination. As has already been mentioned, the newly formed DNSAP was but one of many political parties advocating Anschluss. Leading the party was Walter Riehl, the old DAP organizer from the pre-war days. In an effort to strengthen the party and the unification movement, the Austrian DNSAP joined with the Sudenten DNSAP and the Polish Silesian Nazis to form the Interstate National Socialist Bureau in December of 1919.[24] The energetic Riehl was named chairman of the Bureau, and, in 1920, organized a second commission, which was attended by the new members of the party from Germany. Among their representatives was Adolf

Hitler,[25] who quickly rose through the ranks of his own branch of the party.

With the ascention of Hitler came an increase in radical feelings toward a Putsch. As this "illegal" concept began to grow within the party, Riehl began to shy away from his German cohorts. Riehl was a believer in the parliamentary process, and was interested in putting a representative in the Austrian Parliament.[26] Hitler, on the other hand, was not interested in the slow legal process advocated by his Austrian ally. In August of 1923, at the fifth, and last, Interstate National Socialist convention, Riehl, realizing the popularity of Hitler, resigned as chairman of the Bureau and set off to form his own, legally oriented party.[27] This split with Hitler pulled roughly half of the Austrian National Socialists with Riehl, while the other half followed Hitler (and, accordingly, changed their name to the NSDAP. This branch was also known as the "Hitler Bewegung", or "Hitler Movement"). This factionalization of the party would continually impede the move toward a National Socialist state, as in-fighting took its obvious toll. It would not be until 1930 that the NSDAP would finally outdistance (and eventually annex) the Riehl-led DNSAP, and only then because of the success of the NSDAP in Germany at the polls.

The second problem facing Austrian National Socialists during the decade of the twenties was that of competition from other political parties in the country. The Nazi party was not the only organization in Austria which was considered to be a far right-wing, or even an extremist, group. The Heimwehr (Home Guard) and Frontkampfervereinigung (Front Fighters Association),

both of which were paramilitary outfits, were but two of the numerous ultra-conservative groups in Austria during the post war years that resembled the Nazi party in its political platform. Unfortunately for the NSDAP, "The Nazis' anti-Semitism and demand for an Anschluss were far from unique even among the more moderate Austrian parties."[28] The NSDAP was not alone in its conceptions of proper political action, and suffered from the amount of competition felt from other organizations. Thus, due to the lack of Austrian leadership in the party (Hitler chose no real successor after Riehl's departure until 1931) and the existence of right-wing groups similar to the NSDAP, National Socialism was unable to occupy a distinct place in the Austrian political spectrum throughout the decade of the 1920s.

The Growth of Austrian National Socialism: 1930 - 1933

As the '20s came to a close and the decade of the '30s began, Austria was faced with a dangerous situation. The Republic was hit just as hard as, if not harder than, the other states in western and central Europe. In 1929, Austria's unemployment rate (12.3%) had been higher than Great Britain's (10.4%) and Germany's (9.3%).[29] In 1930, 95% of those Austrians who had held jobs in 1929 were still working. By 1936, a scant 64.6% of those who had held jobs in 1929 were at work.[30] By the end of 1933, unemployed workers numbered over 400,000.[31] Due to her industrial and economic backwardness,[32] Austria was dependant upon the importation of goods from other states; states which did not have the economic capacity to fend for themselves during the

Depression years. As Austrian imports sank,[33] so too did the Austrian economy. As has been previously mentioned, National Socialist feelings, especially pro-Anschluss feelings, often hinged directly on the economic standing of the Republic of Austria. As the crash began, and continued throughout the thirties, the NSDAP gained sympathy from disenchanted workers and urban petit bourgeoise, who were convinced of the failure of Democracy.[34] Again, the quick-fix solution of Anschluss became, for many Austrians, a viable alternative to the chaos of the Depression.

The NSDAP was not inactive during the early years of the slump. Due to Hitler's striking electoral popularity in September of 1930 (in which he won over 6.4 million votes in Germany), membership in the Austrian party skyrocketed, increasing as much as 67% in Styria in the last quarter of 1930.[35] In 1931, Theo Habicht (a German) was appointed by Hitler to take the lead in the Austrian NSDAP (by this time, Walter Riehl and the DNSAP had joined with the Hitler Bewegung because of the party successes in in both German and Austrian elections). The leaderless, factionalized Austrian National Socialist party of the twenties was now an organized group with a visible hierarchy. The success of the party was reflected in local elections held in Upper Austria in April, 1931. 15,770 votes went to the Nazis (an increase of 36% from 1930), while the other major Nationalist party, the Heimwehr, collected 19,000 votes (a drop of more than 50% from 1930). Also in April, elections were held for the Student union at the University of Vienna, where 35% of the votes cast by those enrolled were for Nazi candidates,

resulting in 15 of the 40 chairs going to the young National Socialists.[36] The students of the '30s were following in the footsteps of the students of the 1880s and '90s. As 1931 drew to a close, the NSDAP was still the smallest recognized party in Austria, but "it now had the precious 'momentum' that all political parties need for real success."[37]

Nazi strength in Austria boomed in 1932. Habicht set forth a definite program, aiming to overthrow the Austrian government and to unite Austria and Germany.[38] The government was not unaware of this feeling, and expressed concern over the, "considerable growth of the party in the Lander."[39] Within the Austrian Army, it was known that a fair amount of officers were often present at party meetings (200 men from the Army were reported in attendence in Linz, and another 50 spotted at Klagenfurt).[40] The party was growing in places where loyalty to the state was crucial for Austrian Independence.

Pro-Nazi feelings heigthened as the Depression worsened, as was reflected by the local elections held in the spring of 1932. The provinces of Vienna, Lower Austria, and Salzburg combined to cast 336,000 votes in favor of the NSDAP (compared to 66,000 in 1930). In Vienna alone, 201,000 pro-Nazi votes were cast in 1932, an increase of 170,000 from the 1930 elections.[41] The vote in Austria in 1932 gave the Nazi party 16% of the electorate. It must be noted, however, that a good deal of the increase in pro-Nazi votes came at the expense of other pan-Germanic groups, some of which were forced to fold.[42] As might be expected, these now-defunct nationalist groups gravitated toward the NSDAP, for an

event in Germany in 1933 would change the way politics was to be used in Austria for the next three years.

When Adolf Hitler assumed control of the German government on January 30, 1933, Austrian political ideologies underwent something of a crisis. The Social Democrats and the Christian Socialists (the two biggest parties in Austria in 1933), who had supported the Anschluss movement from its 1918 beginnings, were now forced to drop the plank in light of the new fascist, anti-Marxist, and anti-clerical government in Germany.[43] due to the virtual destruction of the other pan-Germanic parties by the Nazis in the 1932 elections, the NSDAP suddenly emerged as the only party in the Republic which still supported an Anschluss.[44] Just as the need for a leader in the party had been filled (by Habicht in 1931), now the other major problem for the Austrian Nazis was solved; that of uniqueness. With the rise of Hitler came the incorporation of the anti-Marxist Agricultural League and the pan-Germanic Greater German People's party into the NSDAP.[45] The Nazis were now taking the form of a consolidated party, complete with a leader and a good base of popular support. By April, 1933, an estimated 20% to 25% of the Austrian voting population was National Socialist. An additional 10% of the electorate was believed to be pro-Anschluss, if not entirely in favor of the National Socialist platform.[46]

The movement supporting the union of Austria and Germany was a strong one during the post-war period. After declining a bit during the late twenties, pro-Anschluss thought increased as a result of economic catastrophe and National Socialist success in Germany. It was a movement supported by Social Democrats as well

as National Socialists, and by workers as well as the urban petit bourgeoisie. Likewise, the Nazi party, after a promising start in the early twenties, did not take hold in Austria until Hitler's popularity had increased and the Republic's economy had crashed. As Adolf Hitler assumed control of the Reich, and as Austrian workers lost their jobs, the NSDAP emerged as the only pro-Anschluss party in the country, and was able to capitalize on the pan-Germanic attitudes of fellow Austrians expressed in plebiscites, demonstrations, and education. The Anschluss movement, like the NSDAP, was not something imposed upon Austrians by greedy German Nazis. Rather, it was an Austrian-based feeling which could never be avoided. By 1933, the Anschluss movement had become a major political issue, while the Austrian National Socialist party had become a powerful (and growing) political organization. As Hermann Goehring proclaimed in Nuremburg in 1946, "The party in Austria was therefore not a Fifth Column for the Anschluss, because the Austrian people themselves originally wanted and always wanted the Anschluss."[47]

NOTES

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5. Barker, Elisabeth; Austria 1918-1972; pg. 40
6. Pauley; Bruce F.; Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis; pg. 4
7. Ibid; pg. 5

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9. Pauley; pg. 9
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15. Simpson, Mark S.; "The Austro-German Anschluss of 1938"; Midwest Quarterly; Autumn 1977, (XIX) no. 1, pg. 70
16. Ibid; pg. 71
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20. Ibid; pg. 54
21. Pauley; pg. 7
22. Barker; pg. 54
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24. Pauley; pg. 33
25. Ibid; pg. 33-34
26. Ibid; pg. 37
27. Ibid; pg. 37
28. Ibid; pg. 32
29. Ibid; pg. 63
30. Ibid; pg. 64; See Friedrich Hertz; The Economic Problems of the Danubian States; pg. 147
31. Mitchell, Bruce R.; European Historical Statistics; pg. 169
32. Conversation with Bruno Kreisky, 2/20/85, Oberlin, Ohio
33. Mitchell; pg.412
34. Luza; pg. 26-27
35. Pauley; pg. 64
36. Carsten, F.L.; Fascist Movements in Austria; pg. 191
37. Pauley; pg. 72
38. Ibid; pg. 72
39. Carsten; pg. 190
40. Ibid; pg. 190
41. Pauley; pg. 78
42. Ibid; pg. 79
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45. Ibid; pg. 81
46. Pauley; pg. 86
47. IMT; vol. IX, pg. 294

3

RESPONSE

While the urge for Anschluss grew steadily in Austria throughout the 1920s and early '30s, the movement was not, of course, reserved solely for Austrian citizens, nor was it a concern shared by everyone in the Republic. Anschluss had been in the minds of the leaders of the German government during the Weimar years, and had increased in intensity as the new Nazi regime took its place in the Reich. The desire for a union was certainly present in Germany, as it was in Austria, during the '20s and '30s, and found supporters in both camps who were ready to act upon this wish. Likewise, as is the case in any controversial issue, the Anschluss had a great many opponents (in Austria as well as in other Western European states), some of whom happened to hold high official positions in Vienna. As we shall see, the tentative moves made by the Weimar government gave way to blatant attempts toward a union by the Nazi party in both Germany and Austria. Both policies -- the slow, evolutionary policy of Weimar, and the more radical, terroristic policy of the early years of National Socialism -- were thwarted by the opponents of Anschluss; Italy, France, and, more importantly, the Austrian government, which was led by the energetic Engelbert Dollfuss.

The Weimar Republic consistently viewed an Anschluss as a wonderful dream which could never really come true. As the treaties following the First World War came to prove, the

victorious allies were in no mood to accommodate German wishes. Backed into a corner, Germany was forced to accept whatever terms were offered to her without complaint. This attitude prevailed well into the 1920s, and explains why no attempts were made to bring about an Anschluss: Germany did not want to anger the already embittered French, and pursued a timid approach toward foreign policy. The reparation payments demanded of her were already too high for her to pay, and the Weimar leaders chose not to antagonize France with outbursts of Anschluss feelings for fear of compounding this extraordinary burden put upon her economy.

And yet an Anschluss was indeed desired by Germany, but only a much smaller scale than the complete political and economic union espoused in Austria. The German plan was a much more gradual inclusion of Austria into the German culture,[1] and German efforts would seem tame compared to the overt attempts toward Anschluss by the Nazi administration in the thirties. The Weimar Republic aimed its thrusts at the cultural aspect of the question. Exchanges were made between Austria and Germany to coordinate the two legal systems into one, and to present a consistently pro-Anschluss attitude in each country's respective presses.[2] These moves, while ineffectual, were certainly genuine, and show Germany's commitment toward the movement. The German government during the 1920s was, in effect, working to prevent even further restrictions on the Austro-German union than had been initially placed upon them in the treaties of Versailles and St. Germain.[4]

As the twenties progressed, however, so, too, did the boldness of the German government. While it was still convinced of the impossibility of a complete political union, it began to toy with the idea of pursuing an angle different from the mere cultural incorporation of the Reich with the Republic that had been the previous aim of German foreign policy. As the decade of the thirties opened, the focus of German Anschluss thought centered around the possibility of an economic union.[5] Both the German and Austrian governments had suffered political setbacks in national elections during the fall of 1930, attributable to the dire economic situation surrounding the two states. Both governments, seeing their popularity decrease, were desperate for some kind of success, preferrably an economic one.[6] The attempt to regain a popular base of support was also considered to be consistent with the long sought-after union of the two states, and was viewed in the German Foreign Ministry to be, ". . . a prelude to and a temporary substitute for the Anschluss."[7] The mode to be used was that of a customs union, which would build an economic alliance by banning customs payments on imports and exports between the two states. In late November of 1930, the two German-speaking governments began to contact one another in order to set up conditions for a customs union.[8]

Naturally, the French were opposed to such an act, citing the Geneva Protocol of 1922 as well as Article 88 of the Treaty of St. Germain as grounds for rejecting this plan. To the allies, and France in particular, this economic alliance looked too much like a move toward total Anschluss; a prospect unacceptable to Prime Minister Briand and the French government.[9]

Franco-German relations quickly deteriorated as 1930 drew to a close. Talks continued between Austria and Germany, which pushed France into the position of being a regulator. Paris began bombarding Berlin with warnings. As these warnings continued to flow into Germany, ". . . the projected customs union now became the first consideration in German policy."[10] It had become not only an issue of Anschluss, but matter of whether or not German policy could be conducted regardless of the desires of foreign states.[11]

In March, 1931, an agreement was struck between Austria and Germany to implement the plan. While secrecy was obviously desired by both sides, the news quickly leaked out that the customs union had been accepted by both sides. France jumped into action, offering Germany financial aid in return for a renunciation of the customs union.[12] The offer was refused. Germany was adamant in making this, her first independent venture into foreign affairs since Versailles, a successful act.[13] Due to Great Britain's lack of concern over the customs union, the path toward economic union seemed clear. Only a disaster could stop it from occurring.

Three months later, such a disaster struck. The Kreditan-Stalt, a Viennese bank responsible for the financing of most of Austria's industry, crashed in June, 1931.[14] This quickly undercut the customs union proposal. "In order to save the currency, Austria urgently needed foreign credits, in the first place from France."[15] France, in a politically wise move, agreed to save the Austrian economy only if Austria would renounce the

customs union plan. Faced with no options, Austria agreed, thus destroying the first legitimate, if not somewhat disguised, move toward Anschluss between the two German states.

The Weimar Republic was interested in forming some kind of bond with the Republic of Austria throughout the '20s and into the '30s. While not exactly monumental in its actions, a few attempts were made to draw the two states together. Forced into a pressurized situation by the depression of 1930, both governments risked alienating the Western Powers with the customs union in order to preserve political power at home. While the measure was not a successful one, it does indeed demonstrate the desire for Anschluss in Germany before the ascent of Adolf Hitler and the German National Socialist party.

The Nazi German Response

A new attitude toward Anschluss with Austria followed the Nazi party into power in January, 1933. Adolf Hitler's view of Austria as a German state had been voiced as early as 1925 in the opening chapter of Mein Kampf:

> German-Austria must return to the great German mother country, and not because of any economic considerations. No, and again no: even if such a union were unimportant from an economic point of view; yes, even if it were harmful, it must nevertheless take place. One blood demands one Reich. Never will the German nation possess the moral right to engage in colonial politics until, at least, it embraces its own sons within a single state. Only when the Reich borders include the very last German, but can no longer guarantee his daily bread, will the moral right to acquire foreign soil arise from the distress of our own people.[16]

The pursuit of Anschluss was a major part of Hitler's policy, and his vision of a united German-speaking Reich would not leave him

until it became a reality.

As Hitler stepped into office on January 30, 1933, the successful route to a union was in question. The timid experiments toward cultural bonds of the twenties had not furthered the cause, nor had the failed customs union idea. The new regime now turned its back on the pseudo-Anschluss attempts which had focused on economic and social issues. Hitler and the German Foriegn Ministry abandoned these half-measures in favor of an outright political incorporation of Austria. While the National Socialist section in the Germán government and the German diplomatic entourage differed in the means toward this end, both sides were in agreement that a political Anschluss was indeed possible.

As Chancellor of Germany, Hitler's aim was to achieve success from within Austria itself. The growing Nazi party, spurred by Nazi successes in Germany, appeared to be the perfect vehicle for Hitler to use to gain a political foothold in Austria. Once the NSDAP could gain entry into the official government the road to Anschluss would be a quick and easy affair.[17] This "Gleichschaltung",[18] or internal admittance into the Austrian government, was dependent upon national elections and cabinet appointments to show both the popularity of the Nazi movement and its success. With these elections and negotiations for coalitions within the Austrian government, Hitler could increase, ". . . the size and role of the Austrian National Socialists until by pseudolegal means a position of growing authority in the government could be exploited for the subsequent attainment of power."[19] Thus, with Nazis in prominent positions

and with a reasonable argument for popular support, Hitler could complete an Anschluss whenever he so desired.

The German Foreign Ministry, however, had serious reservations about any kind of German intervention in Austrian affairs. There were fears within the German diplomatic circles that the Austrian government, as well as both France and Italy, were gearing up for massive opposition against any kind of German move toward Anschluss.[20] The Austrian government was seen by the Foreign Ministry as willing to look anywhere for help in an effort to secure its independence. France and Italy were seen as open to a possible restoration of the Habsburgs in Austria as long as it would keep the two states separate.[21] The debate between the ideologs in the party and the members of the Foreign Ministry would remain unresolved until July 25, 1934, when the answer to the question of the effectiveness of intervention would be found in the position held by the diplomatic corps.

The Austrian Response

As has been demonstrated, the Anschluss movement within Austria certainly had had a great deal of support throughout the twenties and early 1930s. And yet, in 1933, there occurred a sudden shift in attitude away from a union with Germany of any kind; an economic, cultural, or political move was now frowned upon in official Austrian circles. This move away from an Anschluss can be attributed to two political changes: the rise of Engelbert Dollfuss in Austrian politics and of Adolf Hitler in German politics. It was, in fact, Dollfuss' reaction to Hitler's

rise that truly affected the political climate in 1933-34.

Dollfuss was a prominent figure in the Austrian political arena during the 1920s. He had served as the Minister of Agriculture, and was a leading member of the moderate right-wing Christian Socialist party. Due to the slim majority garnered by the party in the elections of May, 1932, Dollfuss was able to form a tenuous coalition government with two other parties (the Heimatbloc and the Landbund) that held a scant one vote majority over the opposition, which was comprised of the Social Democratic party and various Grossdeutsche parties (the NSDAP had not yet won any seats in Parliament in May, 1932). Dollfuss could not bring in either the Socialists, due to his extreme anti-Marxist views, or the the growing Nazi party, due to his Catholism.[22] The fragile coalition government formed by Dollfuss would not last a year, due to its thin base of support. Without a broad foundation of popular or legislative support, Dollfuss found himself in a precarious position. With the success of Hitler in January, 1933, Dollfuss found that the anti-Catholic Nazis were dangerously close to gaining more support in Austria.

On March 4, 1933, barely a month after Hitler's riegn, Chancellor Dollfuss found himself in a position to secure his position as head of state. In a vote lost by the government during a session of Parliament, the validity of two of the opposition's deputies were questioned. In the ensuing fracas, not only the President of the Parliament (a Social Democrat) resigned, but so, too, did the two Vice-Presidents.[23] With Parliament lacking any kind of authoritative head, Dollfuss siezed his opportunity. Due to the Austrian Constitution, not

even the President of the country, Wilhelm Miklas, could summon Parliament back in session.[24] In order to run the government, the Christian Socialists (the majority party) agreed to a short term authoritarian government with Dollfuss at its head. A few days later, however, the party cleverly announced that the new regime could and would continue in its present state on the basis of an obscure enabling act that had been passed in 1917 during a military crisis.[25] The act, which no one had bothered to revoke after the war, now gave Dollfuss a free hand to rule over Austria as he so desired, without the help, or hindrance, of the Austrian Parliament.

This new semi-dictatorship was a thorn in the side of the new Nazi regime in Germany. Dollfuss permanently disbanded the Austrian Parliament (but kept his cabinet intact) and outlawed any national elections which might be used to re-instate the body. Without national elections, the Austrian NSDAP found itself in a frustrating position. It knew that it had a growing base of support among Austrians, and now with the help of an overtly sympathetic German government, the chances of succeeding in achieving an Anschluss seemed greater than ever before. But the outspoken anti-Nazi Dollfuss regime was now a major obstacle. The lack of elections prevented the NSDAP and its Fuehrer from taking advantage of the new wave of support. To make matters worse, Dollfuss had found a willing partner (or protector) in the person of Benito Mussolini.

Italy had had its eyes on Austria and the rest of Southeastern Europe since Mussolini's rise to power in 1922.

Now, with Dollfuss leading a semi-dictatorial Austria, Mussolini jumped at the opportunity to bring Austria closer to Italy. Knowing that Dollfuss needed foreign support from another authoritarian state, but was uncomfortable dealing with the anti-Catholic Nazis, Mussolini began guiding Dollfuss toward an Italian mode of Fascism.[26] Dollfuss, much to the Italian's delight, accepted the offer,[27] and took Mussolini's advice on a number of issues, including the formation of a Fatherland Front (who's goal it was to preserve Austrian independence) and the elimination of opposition groups.[28] Mussolini, in turn, promised to support Austrian independence and sovereignty.[29] Before the summer of 1933 was over, Austria was considered by many to be a Fascist state in the Italian mold.

The Fatherland Front was a particularly interesting group in the new Austrian Fascist government. It was not a political party in itself, but, as years passed, the Front would accept members from differing political parties.[30] Its role was to create and uphold the independence of the state of Austria. It is important, however, to emphasize one of the fundamental problems with the Front, which also goes a long way in explaining the eventual acceptance of a German government in 1938. Austria was, after all, a nation created not by Austrians, but by her rivals. Over three million German-speaking Austrians were in Czechoslovakia and Italy. And still, the Fatherland Front wanted Austrians to accept this bastard country and turn their backs on the millions excluded from the Austrian state.[31] But the Front did exist in Austria, and was used by Dollfuss, along with the similarly fascist Heimwehr party, as a paramilitary tool to

suppress any whimpers of opposition from either the left or the right.

In the spring of 1933, the situation in Austria was in a state of sudden change. A new government in Germany was now vehemently pro-Anschluss, and was espousing a more comprehensive attitude toward political union than had ever before been supported by a German administration. In Austria, a new dictatorship had been formed, regardless of the fact that it was based on an ever-so-slight majority in the state. Support for the NSDAP was on the rise, but was now unable to be officially measured due the abandonment of the election process by the new Fascist leader. Anschluss was frustratingly close, but unattainable in its present situation. With its goal so close, the Austrian National Socialist party began to take matters into its own hands.

NOTES

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3. Simpson, pg. 73
4. Stambrook, pg. 18
5. Stambrook, pg. 19; Simpson, pg. 74
6. Barker, Austria 1918 -- 1972; pg. 65
7. Stambrook, pg. 19
8. Gehl, Jurgen; Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss, 1931-1938; pg. 6
9. Barker, pg. 65
10. Gehl, pg. 7
11. Ibid, pg. 7

12. Ibid, pg. 11
13. Ibid, pg. 13
14. Barker, pg. 68
15. Ibid, pg. 69
16. Hitler, Adolf; Mein Kampf; pg. 3
17. Gehl, pg. 53
18. Ibid, pg. 53 Gehl describes a "Gleichschaltung" as a primarily National Socialist term. "It signified a policy which, while respecting the independence of another state, aimed at its internal co-ordination."
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20. Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945 (DGFP); Series C, vol I, no. 107
21. DGFP; C, I, no. 107
22. Carsten; Fascist Movements in Austria; pg. 230
23. Pauley; Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis; pg. 104
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25. Ibid, pg. 230
26. Ibid, pg. 232
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28. Gehl, pg. 51
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31. Simpson, pg. 76

4

STAGE ONE

The frustrations felt by the Austrian Nazi party in 1933 were widespread and dangerous. The NSDAP was a growing movement with a strong backing from its German allies. And yet the authoritarian Dollfuss regime was denying it the opportunity to legally enter into the government. Naturally, the Austrian NSDAP reacted against the anti-Nazi government as soon as parliament was officially disbanded. For five years, from March, 1933 to March, 1938, the Austrian Nazis and their supporters in Germany moved to change the status of the party. During these years, the force and pressure exerted upon the Austrian government by the NSDAP became a major factor in determining the eventual outcome of the Anschluss question.

The policy of pressure changed direction a number of times during the five year buildup. Due to the continual changing of circumstances within the Austrian Nazi party, the Austrian government, and the German government, there was not a common line of Anschluss policy upon which all three parties could agree. While the German government concerned itself with foreign opinion and diplomacy (which ultimately led them to a position of evolutionary change), the Austrian Nazis, impatient with the lack of action from the Reich, often diverged from German policies, causing a disparity between the two pro-Anschluss forces and confusing the situation in Austria. Because of shifts in policy, the five year push during the 1930s can be broken down into four

different stages. The first of these began with the dissolution of Parliament on March 4, 1933 and ended with the failed putsch on July 25, 1934. The second stage, one of extreme caution and delicacy, dates from the autumn of 1934, with the realization of the impossibility of Revolution within Austria after the failure of the July putsch, and lasted until the breakthrough of the Gentlemen's Agreement of July, 1936. Stage three, characterized by increased internal strife, stretched from the summer of 1936 until the acceptance by Chancellor Schuschnigg of a German invitation to re-negotiate the terms of the 1936 Agreement on February 7, 1938. The fourth and final stage lasted roughly one month; initiated by Schuschnigg's acceptance, this stage was completed with the final approval of the German-Austrian Anschluss by the Austrian cabinet and the Austrian people in the middle of March, 1938.

The first of these four stages of activity was characterized by a great amount of confusion, stamped with a jumble of motions by a number of different actors (most notably the German Foreign Ministry, the German Nazi party, and the Austrian Nazi party, along with their opponents, Chancellor Dolluss and his pseudo-Fascist government). While the German and Austrian party members were in general (but not complete) agreement about the need for an active terroristic party within Austria, the German Foreign Ministry adamantly supported a slow and non-violent policy toward an Anschluss with Austria. Because of this disagreement, the Austrian NSDAP found itself in a delicate position: it was receiving directives from both the German party and the German

Foreign Ministry, which espoused differing routes toward the solution of the Austrian question. Regardless of their actions, either passive or violent, the Austrian Nazi party was sure to antagonize at least one branch of the German government. Because of this, the Austrian party followed its ideological leaders (Habicht and, to an extent, Hitler), and pursued a rather violent path toward Anschluss. In a situation where both sides (the German party and the German Foreign Ministry) could not be satisfied with the same policy, the Austrian party chose to follow its instincts and accept the inevitable criticism it was to receive. Only with the outright failure of the violent Austrian policy was any kind of concensus reached within the German government. The Foreign Ministry, with its evolutionary program, was successful in convincing its ideological superiors that revolution in Austria was not the answer.

Although the illegal coup d'etat failed in 1934, the violent actions of the NSDAP do suggest the influence of the party in Austria. The responses of Dollfuss illicited by the party demonstrates the fear the former possessed of the latter, as well as the importance placed upon the Nazis by the Austrian government: the movement had to be stamped out at all costs. Its popularity was undeniable, and its ability to influence the policies of the Austrian government became quite evident by the time Dollfuss lay dying in the Austrian chancellery on July 25, 1934.

Action and Counteraction

As soon as Dollfuss' position as dictator had been secured in the early weeks of March, 1933, the battle between the government and the Austrian Nazi party began to build into a heated affair. Oddly enough, the first move toward outright confrontation was initiated not by the National Socialists, but by Dollfuss himself. By banning the national election of Austrian members of Parliament in early March, Dollfuss was immediately putting the NSDAP on the defensive. Six weeks later, in April, 1933, as Dollfuss and Habicht discussed the possibility of an agreement between the two, the Chancellor became well aware of the wisdom of his prohibitive action. As the two men spoke, local elections in Innsbruck (an area traditionally wary of the Nazi party) gave the NSDAP the majority of municipal seats.[1] Without a national election, the Nazis were unable to prove their popularity to Dollfuss and to the Western Powers.

Dollfuss' next move was to ban all public meetings and to forbid any political parades, with the noteworthy exceptions of the Christian Socialist party and the nationalist, fascist Heimwehr party.[2] This action, with the intention of squelching the popularity of both the National Socialist and Social Democratic parties, only served to antagonize them, and made violence a spokesman for their wishes. The Nazi response came in the form of terror bombings, aimed at destroying the Austrian government. These bombings would continue throughout 1933 and well into 1934, and helped not only to vent their frustrations against the government, but also to apply pressure on the administration to change its policies. Because the Nazi aim at

this time was "Gleichschaltung", these bombings were, at first, a form of protesting the abandonment of the electoral procedure and the denial of public political displays.

The German government was also quite perplexed by the suspension of demonstrations and the voting process. In response to this refusal of National Socialist recognition, high German Nazi officials began to scheme and plan against the Dollfuss regime. George S. Messersmith, consul General of the United States in Berlin until the spring of 1934 (when he became Ambassador to Austria), testified in an affidavit after the Second World War that,

> . . . I was told by high Nazi officials in conversation with them, that these waves of terror (the bombings of 1933 and 1934) were being instigated and directed by them . . . (and) that they were responsible for these activities in Austria. These admissions were. . . consistent with the Nazi thesis that terror is necessary and must be used to impose the will of the party not only in Germany, but in other countries.[3]

The terror bombings, initiated by Nazi Germany, were seen in 1933 as one of two ways of pushing the Austrian government toward Anschluss. The other way was formulated by Hitler. While there was speculation about (but no proof of) German involvement in the bombings, the second form of pressure applied to the Dollfuss regime was obviously German in origin.

In order to pressure Dollfuss into repealing his anti-Nazi stances, Hitler first threatened, and then implemented, a tourist boycott upon Austria. The boycott was comprised mainly of a large tax (1000 DM) imposed on German citizens applying for Austrian visas. Because of Austria's dependency on her tourist industry (which was, in turn, dependent on Germany), this tourist

boycott was seen as a dangerous weapon with the capability of doing serious damage to the frail Austrian economy. With the hopes of economically destroying Austria and inciting inner rebellion,[4] Hitler and his fellow Nazi conspirators implemented the move on May 20, 1933.

Dollfuss, with the backing of his Heimwehr and the Italian government, felt strong enough to make a solid statement against the NSDAP. On June 10, 1933, the government announced that the sale of the Volkischer Beobachter was to be banned in Austria.[5] In response to this action, an attempt was made on the life of pro-Austria leader Richard Steidle by angry Nazis on the following day.[6] Within hours of the attack, all Nazi Headquarters were officially closed and sealed by the authorities. This was followed by a decree expelling all soldiers in the Austrian Army with any Nazi affiliations.[7] The pattern of action and reaction, of initiation and reprisal, was steadily gaining speed.

Nazi bombings increased tremendously during the week of June 12-19. Using teenagers as assailants, two businesses were completely destroyed in attacks, killing two and wounding nine others.[8] The climax of the week of terror came on the 19th, when two Nazis, armed with grenades, attacked a police auxiliary force during a parade of "Christian German Gymnasts".[9] The 14 casualties prompted Dollfuss to move quickly. On the same day as the Gymnast attack, the Nazi party was officially banned in Austria.[10] A severe blow had been dealt to the Austrian NSDAP.

The German government was not silent during this period, either. With the banning of the Volkischer Beobachter, Hitler

moved to retaliate by naming Theo Habicht, the German-born leader of the Austrian NSDAP, as a member of the German Legation in Vienna. This obvious attempt to influence Austrian politics with a dipomatic action from the Reich did not go unnoticed by Dollfuss, who quickly refused to allow Habicht entry into the Legation. By the 19th of June, Habicht would be sitting in Munich, the victim of forced exile by the Austrian government.[11]

Upon hearing of Habicht's rejection, Hitler moved to counteract the measure by expelling the supposedly diplomatically immune Austrian Press Attache in Berlin.[12] This action can only be seen as one of desparation by an irate Hitler, seemingly beaten in his attempts for Gleichschaltung by the wary Dollfuss. Yet it must be noted that the anti-Nazi actions taken by the government were, in fact, precipitated by the acts of terror by the Austrian National Socialists. It must also be noted that in expelling the Press Attache, Hitler only served to annoy the Western Powers, especially England and France, and fueled an already growing amount of support for Dollfuss among the European states. During an economic conference held in London during this period, Dollfuss was applauded wildly by his British hosts, while the German delegates to the conference were greeted with hisses.[13] With this show of diplomatic sympathy, Dollfuss undoubtedly felt that the backing needed to rid himself of his hated enemies was present. The Nazi party was in danger of extinction.

This tale of action and reaction does not, of course, end with the outlawing of the Nazis in June, 1933. It was now

Germany's turn to respond to actions taken against her, and she did so without hesitation. As a corollary to the tourist ban, which was still in effect during the summer of 1933, the German government directed an intense propaganda campaign against Austria, complete with anti-Dollfuss radio broadcasts (from Habicht, now stationed in Munich) and leaflet droppings.[14] Naturally, Dollfuss' banning of the party did little to soothe the angry Austrian Nazis. Terror bombings continued throughout 1933 and well into 1934. By February, 1934, reports of bombings reached an average of 40 per day.[15]

Perhaps more important from Dollfuss' outlook was the formation of the Austrian Legion in German towns along the Austrian border. The Legion was composed mainly of deported Nazis and Austrian Anschluss sympathizers in disagreement with the Dollfuss government. They were, in fact, supported with German arms and ammunition, and were trained in, ". . . the most modern methods of street fighting"[16] by German SA men. In late August, 1933, rumors flew throughout Europe concerning the possibility, even the inevitability, of a putsch orchestrated by the German-led Austrian Legion.[17] The British delegates in Vienna, Munich, and Rome were most alarmed by this new threat to the new European status quo. Sir William Selby in Vienna wired Sir Robert Vansittart in London to suggest that Mussolini be notified in case of a putsch.[18] Vansittart, in a message to Minister Murray in Rome, suggested that regardless of the authenticity of such rumors, Italy should be informed of the German plot.[19] The mere presence of an Austrian Nazi force on the border was enough to throw London into a brief panic, and

easily succeeded in terrifying Austrian local officials.[20]

Mussolini and Dollfuss, supplied with information from the British Foriegn office and well aware of the threat themselves, were busy searching for a remedy to the problem. On August 23, the two met to counteract the possibility of a violent putsch. Among the agreements made were provisions for the supplying of arms and ammunition to the Austrian Heimwhr by Italy, as well as a secret bargain to allow 5,000 Italian troops enter into Austria in case of a putsch.[21] The Austrian front was alerted, as invasion by these Austrian Nazis came to be expected.

And yet the attack never came. It was certainly in the works, and was always an option: one must argue that it was seriously considered by Hitler and Habicht at one point or another. But sharp warnings from both Ambassador Rieth in Vienna[22] and State Secretary von Bulow[23] were specific in their arguments against a putsch. Rieth recognized the vulnerability of the small forces (2,000 to 8,000, depending on sources), and warned that a German sponsored putsch, ". . . could be disasterous."[24] Von Bulow echoed these ominous projections, but cited the danger of aggravating the sensitive international situation: Mussolini was certainly interested in the happenings north of the Brenner Pass, and Great Britain was becoming increasingly concerned.[25] While Habicht was certainly excited about the prospect of intervention in Austria,[26] the overriding objections of Rieth and von Bulow were enough to convince Hitler that armed attack was not appropriate in the summer of 1933. The Austrian Legion putsch, expected to be executed in early

September by all of Europe, did not occur. It had been sidetracked by quick actions from Dollfuss, Mussolini, and the British diplomatic services, as well as by the cautious German Foreign Ministry. But there was now a new wrinkle in the story; with the Austro-Italian agreement of August 23, Dollfuss suddenly found himself in an uneasy alliance with Benito Mussolini, which would prove to be an uncomfortable one.

Rather than risk the wrath of Mussolini, Germany and the Austrian Nazis chose to follow a different route towards "Gleichschaltung". In September and October of 1933, Theo Habicht and Chancellor Dollfuss began a series of communiques pointing toward an agreement between the two forces. The terror bombings had continued with regularity since June, and the anxious moments caused by the presence of the Austrian Legion were certainly enough to convince Dollfuss to take a negotiating stance. Habicht, too, was ready to talk. After all, he was sitting in Munich, rather than in Vienna, and was interested in returning to Austria to get back into the fray.

Both sides had a number of demands which they wished to discuss. Habicht pressed for a cabinet with six Nazi members (which would constitute half of the cabinet) as well as his own appointment to the post of vice-chancellor. The bans placed upon the party, its press, and the para-military units of the party (the SA and the SS) were to be lifted, and friendly relations were to be pursued with the German Reich.[27] Dollfuss, on the other hand, wished to stop all anti-government propaganda from German and Austrian Nazi sources, followed by a German renunciation of all ties with the Austrian National Socialist

party. As long as Germany would promise not to interfere in Austrian politics, the ban on the party would be lifted (but elections would still be denied).[28]

Due to the conflicts in each party's demands, agreement was never achieved. Neither side was willing to compromise at that junction, and with good reason.[29] Dollfuss had successfully banned the Nazis, and had received a show of support from the Western Powers in June. Italy had confirmed her role as protector of Austria, and Dollfuss had an active, if not vastly popular, anti-Nazi (but still fascist) party at his disposal in the form of the Heimwehr. Habicht also had no reason to surrender any of his demands. With the growing popularity of the party in Austria, he did have a legitimate claim for the inclusion of the Nazis in the cabinet. He also was the benefactor of a Nazi German government intent upon rearranging the situation in Austria. Dollfuss, simply by communicating with Habicht, was obviously perplexed both by the violent shows of strength from Austrian Nazis and by the mere presence of the Austrian Legion in Bavaria. As October drew to a close, Habicht could afford to play a waiting game, while Dollfuss was strong enough to refuse proposals which were unsatisfactory to him. Neither side was willing to give an inch, and the stalemate which resulted would last for the better part of three years.

As 1934 began, the question of a violent putsch was being raised in Austrian and German NSDAP circles. The party was growing at a great rate, which naturally excited and encouraged the Austrian Gauleiter. In Carinthia, it was reported that, "The

general mood was really excellent",[30] and that party membership had never been so high. Funds were needed from Germany to help build the terror groups being organized. An enthusiastic Gauleiter exclaimed, "Now we must really begin to incite people, to work them up."[31] Styria, too, reported growing members of Nazi adherents, some of whom were crossing over from the pro-Italian Heimwehr.[32]

On January 31, 1934, the German Foreign Ministry (which continually stressed an evolutionary process of Gleichschaltung) got wind of what surely must have terrified the diplomatic corps. The Military Attache in Vienna, General Wolfgang Muff, reported to the Charge d'Affaires in Vienna that a serious plan of action was being devised by impatient Austrian Nazis behind the backs of both Habicht and the German government. The plot was devised by Hermann Reschny, the leader of the radical SA. Reschny was unhappy with the failure of the negotiations with Dollfuss, and was tired of the deliberacy of the German hierachy. The scheme was carefully planned, as special measures had been taken to avoid a leak in Munich and in Austria, for fear of being restricted from acting by either area. The alarmed Charge d'Affaires pleaded that the situation, ". . . require speedy intervention on the part of the top leadership in Germany in order to prevent an irreparable disaster. . ."[33]

In the face of a new threat to Austrian independence, Dollfuss reacted in a rather peculiar fashion. Instead of completely dismantling the Austrian Nazi party with a military action, Dollfuss chose to swing back against the left, the Marxist Social Democrats, in an effort to both appease Mussolini

and to increase the power of the Heimwehr at the expense of the Socialists. For three days, beginning on February 12, 1934, Dollfuss' Heimwehr, along with the police and the army, attacked and destroyed the Socialist party in Austria with a violent action.[34] Dollfuss, who had found himself somewhat bound to Mussolini during the previous summer, was now destroying the most vocal and effective enemy of the NSDAP, partially in order to satisfy the urgings of Italy,[35] which had been pushing Dollfuss to rid Austria of Marxists ever since the beginning of his rule. Nothing, however, was done to block or to "punish" the National Socialists for their plot. Dollfuss, instead, chose to consolidate his own forces, perhaps in anticipation of an ultimate head-to-head confrontation with the Nazis. By destroying the Marxist element in the Republic, Dollfuss was hoping to demonstrate his own iron-fistedness to the Austrian citizen, and wished to draw more supporters into his own camp.

The destruction of the Social Democratic party had an interesting effect on Austro-German relations. German Foreign Minister von Neurath reported on February 16 that Dollfuss was ready to negotiate with Germany and the Nazi party in an attempt to settle their differences.[36] Although the government had been successful in defeating the Social Democrats, reports out of Vienna disclosed information suggesting that Dollfuss was in a precarious position. The previous success of Nazi terror tactics had Dollfuss worried about a possible Guerilla war in the streets and sewers of Austria now that the Marxists were out of the way. Much to the Chancellor's dismay, the Heimwehr was at odds with

both the Army and the Christian Socialist party, doubtless because of the para-military group's penchant for fascist control within the state.[37] Moreover, the German Legation reported as a fact that 80% of the Austrian population was vehemently opposed to the government.[38] With the Dollfuss coalition feuding, an action against the Nazis would be foolish, especially with their growing amount of support. Dollfuss, therefore, was ready to talk.

But the German Foreign Ministry refused to comply with the Austrian Chancellor's desires. Dollfuss still refused to recognize the NSDAP in Austria, which was (for Germany) the prerequisite for negotiations.[39] Furthermore, the NSDAP had survived the Civil War without spilling the blood of any Austrians. The government was seen as the vicious party, while the Nazis were seen as innocent bystanders in the purge.[40] The German Legation in Vienna urged Berlin not to compromise itself by negotiating with Dollfuss. Because the government seemed ready to collapse, Germany drew a hard line, refusing to give Dollfuss any kind of opening with which to strengthen his position.

The confusion of the entire situation was only deepened during the month of March, 1934. The conflicting attitudes of pressure applied by the party in Austria and the apprehensions over overt opposition in the German Foreign Ministry came into direct confrontation. The proposed plot quietly scheduled by the Austrian NSDAP for March 15 (behind Germany's back) had been averted when word of the plan reached Berlin in January of 1934. But this foiled scheme did not dishearten the NSDAP in Austria.

Bombings had continued throughout the winter, with the exception of the period during the Civil War, when the Dollfuss regime did most of the shooting. The party was becoming increasingly impatient. The inactivity from Germany disappointed the hardline radical Nazis, and the German Foreign Ministry was well aware of their dissatisfaction. On March 15, the director of the South-eastern department, Gerhard Kopke, cabled German Ambassador Rieth in Vienna ordering the discontinuation of assaults, both violent attacks and attacks by the Press and Radio, upon the Austrian government.[41] With the destruction of the Social Democratic party, it was felt in Berlin that the Heimwehr, led by the increasingly powerful Emil Fey, was a stronger force within the country than ever before, and that Dollfuss was preparing for a long campaign against the NSDAP.[42] Rather than become entangled in a military situation in Austria, the German Foreign Ministry advised that all attacks against the government must be avoided, for fear of provoking a large scale action from both Dollfuss and, even more dangerous, from Mussolini, which could prove disasterous for the Anschluss movement.[43] In its place, Habicht and the Austrian NSDAP would have to rely more on party organization, positive propaganda for the Nazi party, and the increase in membership for diplomatic success. As Kopke wrote to Rieth, ". . . the purpose of this will be to make it impossible for any Austrian government to rule in the long run without this, the most effective and the strongest party in the country."[44]

Upon hearing news of this new course of action, Habicht called on the German Foreign Minister (Neurath) to voice his

displeasure. By censuring his anti-Dollfuss speeches, as well as other anti-government propaganda, Habicht feared that the possibility of party disintegration would greatly increase.[45] Habicht wished to continue his boisterous attacks in order to counter act the propaganda used by the Austrian government to bring Austrians back into the fold (rumors were circulating that Germany would soon lift its tourist ban, which made Dollfuss look as if he had successfully weathered the siege).[46] Hitler was then informed of Habicht's complaints, which he quickly disallowed. The more evolutionary policy was to be followed, with a shift on emphasis for propaganda: now, speeches were to made showing the advances of the party, its successes, and its promising future, rather than the weaknesses and ineffectiveness of the Dollfuss regime.[47] An attempt had to be made to build a mass movement, even at the expense of alienating some of the more radical Nazis still in Austria.[48]

This alienation did, in fact, occur. By the end of the month, a new plot had been hatched in Lower Austria to attack the Austrian cabinet and take its members prisoner. The small group of activists who had designed the plan requested German assistance in the action, and informed Ambassador Rieth of their intentions.[49] Needless to say, Rieth (as an arm of the GFM) was taken aback by this suggestion. He hastily informed these plotters that their suggestion was not consistent with German aims at the moment.[50] Soon thereafter, Rieth notified Berlin of the plot, suggesting that, ". . . appropriate steps be taken to stop this action."[51] For fear that Rieth's refusal had not persuaded these Nazis to desist from taking action, Hitler

contacted Habicht on April 3 requesting that, ". . . you would also take the necessary measures there to prevent any plans that might possibly still exist in spite of this."[52] German policy was now plain for all to see: the revolutionary tactics desired by the Austrian National Socialists were unacceptable. A more gradual policy was now the only way to bring the Nazi party into power in Austria.

The impatient Nazis, however, could not sit on their hands. By the end of April Nazi terror in Austria began a steady increase from the winter of 1934. On the 27th came the attempted assassination of Heimwehr leader Emil Fey.[53] Throughout May, June, and July, the intensity of violent actions by Austrian Nazis grew by leaps and bounds. As Jurgen Gehl writes;

> During March and April (1934) the Austrian Nazis followed Hitler's order that all extreme activities were to be stopped. When these tactics yielded no immediate results the Austrian radical elements resumed their terrorist activites.[54]

The NSDAP was in a bind. Negotiations with Dollfuss had been suggested a number of times, but had consistently fallen through.[55] Some young militant Nazis, certainly dissatisfied with the Dollfuss regime, were leaving the party in favor of "militant Communist Organizations",[56] which were unafraid of flexing their muscles. The Nazi party needed to retain this element within their ranks in order to maintain the aura of strength and power, yet the only way to do so was to pursue a violent policy against the Austrian government, which was strictly forebidden in Berlin. Just as threatening was the notable increase in power of the Dollfuss regime, due both to the

almost complete defeat of the Marxist element in Austria and to a new constitution produced by the government on April 30. The Italian influence in the Heimwehr and on Dollfuss was easily recognizable, pulling Dollfuss more and more into a Mussolini-orbit.[57] The outlook was indeed bleak for the NSDAP.

The German Foreign Ministry was also well aware of the problems facing Nazism in Vienna. The impatience of the party was recognized by Franz von Papen in Berlin, who, near the end of May, recorded the difficulties of the situation. Realizing the impulse in the Austrian ranks to act, Papen saw that such pressure would be in vain, and that even with the help of the Austrian Legion in Bavaria, an attempted putsch would not have enough power to succeed.[58] In his memorandum, Papen noted two interesting points, both of which were to become important parts of the story in the ensuing months. Papen claimed that due to Mussolini's wariness toward Germany, Gleichschaltung could only effectively be obtained after some kind of agreement had been reached with Italy.[59] A meeting between the two parties must take place, with Germany securing some kind of approval from Mussolini. Moreover, Papen mentioned an interesting rumor that was slowly circulating among high Nazi officials; it was reported that certain elements of the Austrian Army, specifically the officer corps, were pro-Anschluss.[60] Due to the importance of the military in any uprising, this information was certainly of great interest to the German government. If the Army could be convinced to follow the NSDAP in an action against the government, success might, in fact, be possible. The only question now was, were they (the Army) ready to become involved

in active putsch? The answer to this question would prove to tip the scales against the Nazis in July.

In Austria, meanwhile, the situation was becoming more tense by the day. As May drew to a close, a confrontation between Austrian Nazis and the Heimwehr appeared to be inevitable. On the Austro-German border, a high concentration of Heimwehr formations were provoking members of the Austrian Legion.[61] Both sides had fired upon one another, and Neurath anxiously requested that measures be taken to relieve the pressure in that area. The South-eastern department of the GFM was convinced that either insurrection or open revolt would soon occur, due primarily to the threat of martial law imposed by the government.[62] In the face of direct orders from Hitler and the German Foreign Ministry, the Austrian NSDAP was creating the confrontational situation feared most by those of rank in the German government.

On June 15 and 16, Hitler traveled to Venice to confer with Mussolini in a meeting foreseen by Papen the month before. While the conference was officially proclaimed as a meeting to improve German-Italian relations in general, the main topic of the talks was the Austrian situation.[63] Hitler quickly initiated the Austrian discussion by conceding that an Anschluss was not feasible at that time, and that he had no demands for the political preference of the leader of the Austrian state as long as he had an "independent outlook" on the situation.[64] The only demand Hitler really made was that national elections be held to represent the attitudes of the Austrian people (which, he was sure, would reflect an overwhelming support for the NSDAP,

forcing their inclusion into the government).[65] Mussolini had little to say in regard to these statements; he found them irrelevant to the current situation where no elections could legally be held at all. The Austrian obstacle was a big one in Venice, and neither Hitler nor Mussolini came away from the talks feeling that a closer bond had been forged between them.[66]

The failure of this meeting only reaffirmed the beliefs in the more radical sections of the party that a peaceful, diplomatic "Gleichschaltung" was all but impossible. On June 25, Habicht met with various leaders of the Austrian Nazi party leaders in Zurich to discuss their situation. Among those present was Fridolin Glass, founder of the newly formed Austrian SS Standarte 89 (which was composed mainly of ex-Austrian soldiers who were members of the NSDAP).[67] Glass proposed that his unit attack and kidnap the Austrian cabinet, while also seizing the Austrian radio and telephone headquarters, in an effort to present the Nazis with a situation to set up a new government.[68] While the plan was not officially considered, this was the first mention of the eventual putsch of July 25.

The month of July was marked by a noticeable build up of propaganda and anxiety in both German and Austrian Nazi circles. The GFM, realizing that the Austrian Legion was responsible for a number of terror bombings across the border, frantically contacted the Ministry of Interior, requesting that all connections between Germany and the Legion be dropped immediately. The foreign press had discovered that Germany was responsible for supplying the Legion with the explosives used in terrorist activities, and were lambasting Germany in their

respective newspapers.[69]

In Austria, the leaders of the Nazi party again met, this time in Munich, to discuss the proposal by Glass, who brought forward interesting information; ". . . he had had 'positive negotiations' with Dr. Steinhausl, a senior pro-Nazi of the Vienna police, with the commander of the police emergency squad, and with two unnamed Army staff officers."[70] Papen's curiosity concerning the availability of the Army during a putsch was now seemingly answered, and the conspirators agreed to set the date for the putsch on July 24, when the cabinet was to next meet.

Hermann Reschny, the disgruntled leader of the SA, was also present at this meeting, and did not like what he was hearing. According to the plan, while the SS Standarte 89 was busy controlling the government, the SA would occupy any resisting forces in the outer regions of Austria. Reschny, who had masterminded the foiled plot in January of 1934, was not terribly excited with the prospect of playing second fiddle to the SS, especially after the news of the Rohm purge, two weeks earlier. Upon hearing the plans for the putsch, Reschny secretly gave the information to the Austrian security forces. Because he felt (correctly) that the SA would not be properly armed for an open confrontation with the Army for a number of months, Reschny refused to notify the SA leaders around Austria. As a result, When the putsch finally did occur, a number of SA leaders were completely shocked, and did nothing to further the revolt due to lack of orders.[71]

Jurgen Gehl argues that Hitler himself was converted to the

plan by Habicht, who now rushed to the Chancellor to get the support of his superior. Based on Glass' report, which was certainly not complete, Habicht convinced Hitler that the Austrian Army was willing to act against the government in an effort to support an Anschluss. Hitler found this information to be most illuminating, and consistent with his own beliefs. If he could get a force from within the state to achieve that which he wanted to achieve, he could obtain his goals without dirtying his own hands.[72] Hitler argeed to the plan, and assured Habicht that if the Austrian Nazi party did in fact receive the support of the armed forces, Germany would be able to give the new Austrian government political (but not military) support.[73]* The Austrian NSDAP, armed with an enthusiastic group of people to carry out the putsch, the (supposed) support of the Austrian police and military, as well as a tacit agreement from the Fuehrer himself, was finally in a position to take control.

Regardless of whether or not Hitler actually knew of the planned putsch, the operation commenced in both Munich and Vienna. The plan called for SS troops to occupy the Austrian chancellery, holding the entire cabinet (including Fey and Dollfuss) hostage. The National Radio Center, as well as the

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* In retrospect, it is, indeed, difficult to accept Gehl's theory that Hitler knew of the plan and offered his support to it. He had consistenly followed the advice of the GFM on the Austrian issue, and their policy was set upon an evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, conclusion. The sudden shift in Hitler's attitude as is suggested by Gehl is in direct opposition to his behaviour befor this alleged meeting. Furthermore, the source given by Gehl as confirmation of the Habicht-Hitler meeting, Hermann Goehring, cannot be considered as completely reliable. I am of the opinion that the remarks made by Goehring during the war crimes trials were very often fabricated to either shift blame from one person to another, or to enhance his own role in important events.

Viennese telephone service, would be simultaneously taken, with continuous announcements given proclaiming both the downfall of the Dollfuss government and the creation of a new government based on the Nazi-German model. Upon acceptance of the new government by the Dollfuss cabinet, the hostages would be freed and the Nazi cabinet would take its place. Naturally, this plan hinged on the support of the Austrian Army, as well as the police force, without whom the entire process would be futile.[74]

The SS unit was primed and ready to act on July 24. But news arrived from inside sources revealing that the cabinet meeting planned for the 24th had been postponed until noon the next day. The Nazi plans were pushed back accordingly.[75]

At one o'clock on the 25th, 154 members of the SS troop approached the Chancellery disguised as policemen and Austrian troops. They were admitted into the building by the police guard without incident, and, upon entering, proceeded to physically over-power the interior guards and secure the area.[76] Dollfuss, warned of the plot by the Austrian police shortly before the Nazi terrorists entered the building, had enough time to dissolve the cabinet before it was taken by the National Socialists.* As a result, when the Nazis burst into the cabinet room, only a handful of dignitaries were present, and all of them were

* Gehl believes that Fey and the Heimwehr were aware of the plot well before hand, but were also planning against Dollfuss, thereby refusing to let him know of the putsch in time for him to escape. Pauley, on the other hand, claims that the police were informed of the matter 24 hours before it occurred, but due to incompetancy, were only able to inform Dollfuss of the plan 45 minutes before it occurred. Regardless of this disparity, it is obvious that Dollfuss knew of the putsch, but had only enough time to quickly dismiss his cabinet.

expecting the terrorists (Why the Nazis were allowed entrance into the Chancellery without meeting any opposition is still a mystery). The Nazis had hoped to put their plan into effect without violence, but were unable to fulfill this hope. The Chancellor, in an effort to escape the building through a side exit, was shot in the neck by an SS man, and died during the course of the day due to a lack of medical attention. Emil Fey, meanwhile, who had been in the cabinet session when Dolfuss was forced to dismiss it, had called up his Heimwehr units, as well as the Austrian police, which quickly surrounded the building. After long negotiations, most of which centered around a free passage to Germany for the conspirators, the SS troops were forced to surrender.[77]

At the Austrian National Radio station, 15 Nazis had successfully occupied the area, but had failed to drum up any kind of support. One brief message was given over the air that the Dollfuss government had given way to a new one, led by the National Socialist party, which was supposed to be the signal for a mass uprising; but this announcement was too short to be effective and, inexplicably, was not followed by any others of the same vein; in fact, no information was given of any kind throughout the day. The Austrian Nazis simply played records that afternoon.[78]

A good deal of sporadic fighting from SA units did occur during the days following this failed attempt, but they were too disjointed to make much of an impact on the Austrian government. Many of the SA men who did not receive instructions (due to

Reschny's intrigues) refused to help the SS because of the Rohm purge in Germany. Those who did participate in the rebellion were simply overwhelmed by the Heimwehr, police, and Austrian Army, all of whom were expected to join the uprising to some extent. In some areas, the SS refused to help the rival SA in the fighting, perhaps because they knew that in Vienna the SA had not assisted the SS Standarte 89 in the Chancellery.[79] Fighting continued for a number of days after the surrender in Vienna, but the suspense was over, and the putsch had obviously failed. Most of the 80% of the population tagged to support the putsch merely watched the proceedings with great curiosity:[80] they had seen the destruction of the Marxists in February, and they were now witnessing the defeat of the Nazis in July.

The defeat of the Nazis naturally had disasterous effects upon German foreign policy. Much to the embarrassment of the German government, it was revealed that Ambassador Rieth had agreed to grant safe conduct passes to the conspirators, which obviously implicated Germany in the plot.[81] Furthermore, Mussolini had been expecting Dollfuss in Rome within the week, and had been entertaining his family in the Italian capital when news of the assassination reached him. The difficulty of telling Frau Dollfuss of her husband's death only deepened his displeasure. The Italian Army mobilized, sending a number of divisions to the Austro-Italian border, and did not enter the country only upon learning of the complete failure of the coup.[82] Fingers were pointed toward Hitler and the German government, as the plot smelled much like a German-led operation.

Indeed, there were a number of German officials who knew of

the plot. While Ambassador Rieth was caught unaware of the plot, his subordinates, Counselor of Legation Altenburg and Military Attache Muff, were well informed of the plan, and even helped the conspirators in their scheme.[83] In Berlin, the Ministry of Propaganda knew of the plot, and issued a hasty communique declaring the success of the uprising and revealing details of the plot before they had actually occurred.[84] Whether or not Hitler knew of the plan is debatable; if he did not know, however, it would appear odd that so many of his subordinates knew of the plot without his knowledge.

Regardless of whether or not Hitler approved of the operation, the attempted putsch was undoubtedly originated in the minds of the Austrian Nazi leaders. The NSDAP in Austria planned and implemented the coup on its own initiative, although it did receive German support in the form of weapons and explosives, which Germany had been supplying for over a year. Because the plot was led by Habicht and the Austrian SS, it has been suggested that, "The July Putsch was as much a last, desparate effort by Habicht to regain control of the Austrian NSDAP as it was an attempt to overthrow the Dollfuss regime."[85] This is not an entirely far-fetched idea, for we have seen that Habicht was not in agreement with those in the German Foreign Ministry, nor with Hermann Reschny. I do feel, however, that the putsch cannot simply be dismissed as a show of strength, a move to consolidate power, or an act of defiance in the face of the Third Reich. It is vitally important to note that the forces which overwhelmed the Chancellery on the 25th, and which battled unsuccessfully

with the Heimwehr and Army in the outer regions on the following days, did so voluntarily, and with an enthusiasm matched only by the solemn feeling of committment to the movement. This was a genuine demonstration of the desparate nature of the entire party (with certain notable exceptions, of course -- i.e. Reschny), rather than by a small number of highly placed individuals. The radical young Nazis were influencing other party members, and the failure of negotiations between Dollfuss and Habicht, as well as those between Hitler and Mussolini, had convinced many Austrians that revolution was the only suitable means for any kind of victory, regardless of the opinions held in Berlin.

The actions by the party were, of course, entirely counterproductive for the Anschluss movement. The NSDAP, the only real spokesman for a union, was formally disbanded by Hitler on August 7, although he did set up a relief fund for refugees from Austria.[86] The Austrian Legion, which had caused so much anxiety with its mere presence, was moved North, away from the Austro-German border and away from trouble-making.[87] Habicht was released from his duties as Landesleiter of the Austrian party, and his headquarters in Munich was dismantled.[88] Hitler was now forced to completely dissociate himself from the Austrian NSDAP in order to save face in front of France, Great Britain, and, especially, Italy. German interference in Austrian affairs was now to come to a standstill.[89]

German policy towards Austria now took on a new form, as did the role of the party in Austria. Ambassador Rieth's blunder in agreeing to guarentee the putschists' safe passage to Germany quickly cost him his job. He was replaced by Hitler's old rival,

Franz von Papen (who had barely escaped execution during the Rohm purge). The conservative attitude of Papen was completely consistent with the evolutionary process long espoused by the diplomatic corps, and recently accepted by Hitler. Upon Papen's arrival in Vienna, the American Ambassador to Austria, George Messersmith, noted that, "It was his business to see that the Anschluss was brought about peacefully."[90] Hitler, by sending the peace-minded Papen to Vienna, was obviously serious about maintaining a strictly evolutionary policy in Austria. The mood from Berchtesgaden became one of thinly disguised demoralization. These somewhat empty hopes were illustrated in a letter written by Rudolf Hess to an inquisitive party member on August 21:

> Let me assure you that, despite everything, the designs now taken by the Fuehrer in respect of National Socialism in Austria will one day, and in a perfectly legal manner, enable all your wishes and ours regarding Austria to be fulfilled.[91]

The defeat of the July putsch had put Germany back square one, and the government was well aware of the long road which now lay ahead of it.

The Austrian party, too, took on a new heading. The NSDAP had attempted to force its entry into the government by a violent action, and without active support from German allies. They had been pressuring the Dollfuss regime with terrorist activities for months on end, and had often forced the Austrian Chancellor into making anti-Nazi decrees. Granted, Dollfuss was opposed to the NSDAP from the beginning of his reign, but it can not be argued that the National Socialists did nothing to antagonize the Austrian leader. But now, after the failure of

the putsch, the party took on a new role. As Gerhard Weinburg astutely notes,

> The role of the Austrian party henceforth would not be to take over power inside the country but to provide a vehicle for taking over from the outside by force or under threat of force.[92]

During 1933 and the first half of 1934 the relationship between the party and the German government had been difficult to pinpoint. Both sides used the other in one form or another: the Nazis in Austria obtained explosives and politically rhetorical backing from the German government, while Hitler and his government saw the party as a means of gaining at least a Gleichschaltung in the Austrian government. But now, with the German government stung and licking its wounds from its connection (or apparent connections -- i.e. Rieth) with the putsch, the Austrian party could not expect much overt help from across the border. Now the party would take on the role of a puppet organization, as Hitler became the one pulling the strings and inducing the other to dance as he saw fit.

As 1934 drew to a close, the German policy of an evolutionary pursuit of entry into Austria was an undebatable one. The alternative had been tried and had failed. The party, outlawed in Austria and disowned in Germany, was much more worse off than it had been before the attempt. Germany, not the Austrian NSDAP, was now in the driver's seat, and it was intent upon making the drive as slowly and deliberately as possible. Anschluss, indeed, seemed a long way off.

NOTES

1. Gehl; Austria, Germany and the Anschluss; pg. 56
2. Pauley; Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis; pg. 104
3. International Military Tribunal, vol. II, pg. 354, Document Number 1760-PS, Exhibit USA-57
4. Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1919-1945, Series C, vol. I, no. 256
5. Pauley, pg. 105
6. Ibid, pg. 105. Pauley claims that no evidence was ever discovered proving German participation in the assassination attempt.
7. Ibid, pg. 105-106
8. Ibid, pg. 106
9. Ibid, pg. 107
10. Gehl, pg. 58
11. Weinberg; The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany, 1933-1936; pg. 92
12. Ibid, pg. 92
13. Ibid, pg. 92; DGFP, Series C, vol. I, no. 313
14. Gehl, pg. 58
15. Pauley, pg. 106
16. Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1945, Series 2, vol. V, no. 355
17. DBFP, Series 2, vol. V, no. 338, 339, 340, 349, 355; DGFP, Series C, vol. I, no. 407
18. DBFP, Series 2, vol. V, no. 363
19. DBFP, Series 2, vol. V, no. 338
20. DBFP, Series 2, vol. V, no. 363
21. DBFP, Series 2, vol. V, no. 353
22. DGFP, Series C, vol. I, no. 407
23. DGFP, Series C, vol. I, no. 411
24. DGFP, Series C, vol. I, no. 407
25. DGFP, Series C, vol. I, no. 411
26. DGFP, Series C, vol. I, no. 385
27. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 35
28. Pauley, pg. 123-124
29. Ibid, pg. 124
30. Carsten; Fascist Movements in Austria; pg. 256
31. Ibid, pg. 256
32. Ibid, pg. 257
33. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 229
34. Weinberg, pg. 97
35. Ibid, pg. 97
36. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 260
37. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 263
38. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 263
39. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 260
40. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 263
41. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 328
42. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 328
43. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 328
44. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 328, pg. 615
45. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 329

46. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 329
47. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 329
48. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 329
49. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 369
50. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 369
51. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 369, pg. 692
52. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, footnote to no. 369, pg. 692
53. Pauley, pg. 125
54. Gehl, pg. 89-90
55. Ibid, pg. 90
56. Ibid, pg. 90
57. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 459
58. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 459
59. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 459
60. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 459
61. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 462
62. DGFP, Series C, vol. II, no. 469, no. 492
63. Gehl, pg. 92
64. Gehl, pg. 92; DGFP, Series C, vol. III, no. 5
65. Gehl, pg. 92; DGFP, Series C, vol. III, no. 5
66. Gehl, pg. 92
67. Ibid, pg. 92-93
68. Ibid, pg. 93
69. DGFP, Series C, vol. III, no. 116
70. Gehl, pg. 96
71. Pauley, pg. 129
72. Gehl, pg. 96
73. Gehl, pg. 97
74. Pauley, pg. 131
75. Gehl, pg. 97
76. Gehl, pg. 97
77. Pauley, pg. 131
78. Ibid, pg. 131
79. Ibid, pg. 133
80. Ibid, pg. 132
81. DGFP, Series C, Vol. III, no. 115
82. Weinberg, pg. 105
83. Ibid, pg. 102
84. Ibid, pg. 103
85. Pauley, pg. 137
86. DGFP, Series C, vol. III, no. 149
87. DGFP, Series C, vol. III, no. 135
88. Weinberg, pg. 106
89. DGFP, Series C, vol. III, no. 173
90. Quoted in Weinberg, pg. 107
91. DGFP, Series C, vol. III, no. 173
92. Weinberg, pg. 106

5

STAGE TWO

The failure of the July putsch caused an enormous shift in the attitudes and outlooks of the major characters in the story. The German government and the Austrian Nazi party were sent reeling from their defeat, and were forced to re-evaluate the situation and their own methods of bringing about an Anschluss with Germany. The Austrian government, along with Mussolini, was now justifiably alarmed and wary of the volatile party. With its new leader, the ex-Minister of Justice and Christian Socialist Kurt Schuschnigg, the Austrian government found itself depending on the help of its Italian neighbor for its very survival. These four actors -- the Austrian Nazis, the Austrian government, the German government, and the Italian government -- scurried to find acceptable and effective policies to further their own needs. Each participant eyed the others cautiously and suspiciously, searching for a way to discredit its opponents, to consolidate its own strength, and to make its allies tow the line.

The initial reactions to the putsch in late July and August were, naturally, quite varied. German policy toward Austria was particularly influenced by the attempted coup. Hitler and the German Foreign Ministry were now adamant in their demands that only a peaceful policy could be pursued in Austria. A number of approaches were taken by the GFM to deter the Austrian NSDAP from continuing its violent approach to the problem of Anschluss (or at least of Gleichschaltung). Customs officials on the German side of the Austrian border were given strict orders to prohibit

the smuggling of explosives into Austrian territory.[1] It was generally recognized in the German hierarchy that most of the weapons and explosives used by the party in Austria were, indeed, manufactured in the Reich and then brought into the republic for terrorist purposes, all of which was condoned by the German government. Now, the first step toward Nazi disarmament was enacted by the Fuehrer himself, Adolf Hitler. He had officially dismantled the party in August 1934, in an effort to silence his critics abroad and to appease those whose opinion was of importance to Hitler, namely his own Foreign Ministry and the Italian Prime Minister. The entire Nazi-German hierarchy caught onto this new policy outlook, and convincingly espoused its evolutionary bent. In a communique with Counselor of Legation Altenburg, Rudolf Hess and Martin Bormann argued that because of the Austrian government's refusal to legally recognize the NSDAP, the,

> . . . existence of the party in Austria would only entail fresh and heavy sacrifices, which would from the outset prove to be senseless and purposeless.[2]

The message continued to plead for the discontinuation of Austrian Nazi gatherings, as well as anti-Austrian propaganda. Interference in Austrian political affairs was now deemed futile, and even detrimental, to the cause.[3]

Perhaps the most vivid evidence of Hitler's commitment to an evolutionary policy was his appointment of Franz von Papen to the German Legation in Vienna. Papen was a well known proponent of the evolutionary process, and was an unquestionably astute diplomat. The tension caused by the violent putsch made Papen's

job a clear-cut one. He was to mend the wounded feelings and accusing attitudes of the Austrian government and people. The disbanding of the party was, in a grand sense, the most convincing move that could have been made to settle the anxiety felt by the members of the Austrian government. While this action was a genuine attempt to halt the violence of over-zealous Nazis, it must also be understood that this was merely a change in strategy, rather than an abandonment of the goal of Anschluss. After the failed July putsch, Papen's evolutionary policy was formulated on the idea that because Austria distrusted Germany so much, the only way to get back into good graces with Austria would be to allow Germans and Austrians to mix, and to recognize the superiority of German intellect and culture. This could only be done with the lifting of the tourist ban, which would allow the rebuilding of trust between the two states.[4]

In Berlin, the German hierarchy was walking a very thin line on rather shaky ground. As a corollary to the disbanding of the party, Germany had cut off its funding to the Austrian Nazi groups.[5] Money that had once been used to publish anti-government propaganda, buy weapons, and pay for demonstrations was now unavailable for the Austrian party. At the same time, however, a relief fund which had been operating before the putsch was continued. This fund, the "Fluchtlingshilfwerk" sent money to the families of executed or arrested Austrian Nazis to the tune of nine million Marks in 1935 alone.[6] In doing so, the German government was encouraging party members to stay in Austria, rather than flee to Germany where they were beginning to be a burden on the Austrian Legion camps. Of course, the more

Nazis in Austria, the more internal support Hitler would have when "the day" arrived. In addition to this economic relief (which was tolerated by the Austrian government), other forms of interference were instigated by the German government. A meeting was called in the early autumn of 1934 to discuss the possibilities of using imports from Austria so that they would benefit only the party in some way.[7]

And yet these actions by the German government were mild in comparison with its previous policies toward Austria. The nurturing of the Legion, the selling of weapons to the party in Austria, and the cooperation of Germans in Vienna were much more overt and influential than the rather small-scale operations centering around relief funds and import-tampering. Hitler was strict with his insistences of tranquility within Austria. As late as April, 1936, Germany was adamant in its anti-violent approach. Upon learning of plans to form SA terrorist groups, an order was sent to Reschny in Austria stating;

> The Fuehrer most strictly forbids any such action. You are requested. . . to exert influence over the Austrian SA men to this effect. Were it to be established that there exist connections between the Reich and Austria which could be associated with terrorist outrages, the Fuehrer would be compelled to take ruthless measures against the instigators.[8]

From August, 1934 until July, 1936, Hitler and his government actively sought to dissociate themselves from anything that remotely resembled a repeat of the July fiasco. The Austrians had already bungled up the job once before: Germany was not ready for them to do it again.

The Austrian party was in a precarious situation following

the putsch attempt. Their effort to discredit the government by showing its weakness when under attack had backfired completely. In fact, the government now took on the role of the only savior in Austria. Within the span of six months, the Austrian government had confronted and beaten back both the Marxist element and the terrorist problem in the Republic, and had done so on its own. Dollfuss now appeared as a martyr, while all opposition parties (especially the Nazis) were perceived as the defeated villains.[9] What was more, the party had lost a good deal of popular sympathy during the putsch because, "taxes had to be raised to repair damaged public property."[10] The coup had been a total flop.

The disowning of the Nazis by Hitler naturally demoralized the party, and literally set the program back to square one. With no centralized headquarters in either Austria or Munich, the disorganized party faced the danger of completely disintegrating. Although anxious to avoid direct contact with the party, Germany realized that the complete demise of the party in Austria would destroy any chance of Anschluss. An operation was "suggested" to the Austrian party, and quickly implemented by the Nazis. While urged to disband, the Nazis had also been encouraged to join other groups in Austria in an effort to infiltrate and influence the political parties in the Republic, specifically the Labor Front, where there seemed to be a growing amount of anti-government sentiment.[11]

In keeping with the idea of using other political arms to express Nazi ideology, Nazi peasant leader Anton Reinthaller attempted to negotiate with the government in an effort to secure

at least partial legality for oppositionists from the Austrian government during the Autumn of 1934. Reinthaller proposed to compromise with Schuschnigg, offering to completely destroy the NSDAP in name, then combine its members with the old Greater German party and the Landbund to form a nationalist opposition party. This new party would be included in the government and would sponsor a nationwide plebiscite to determine Austria's future. In return, Nazi terror (which was already slowed to a trickle due to lack of funding Germany) would cease altogether, and the 1000 Mark tourist ban would come to an end.[12]

But the Reinthaller proposal suffered setbacks from the beginning. Schuschnigg quickly realized that the new party was really just a cover for the Nazis, and that Germany would still be sponsoring the nationalists regardless of the status of the NSDAP. Schuschnigg demanded that the national opposition would have to actively join the pro-government Fatherland Front if it were to be accepted into the cabinet, a condition unfathomable to the Nazis as an organization. On the other side of the coin, Reinthaller's relatively late arrival into the Nazi party caused grumblings among the "Altkampfers". His use of ex-GVP and Landbund members only increased his unpopularity among long-time Nazis, who disliked this upstart trying to take control of the party.[13] Because of Reinthaller's unpopularity in his own party and Schuschnigg's patriotic demands, the negotiations did not succeed. Reinthaller, who had begun to assume control of the party, quickly lost favor among the Austrian Gauleiter, and soon the debate over the rightful leader of the party swung into high

gear.

Due to his lack of success in securing an agreement with the Schuschnigg government, Reinthaller voluntarily stepped down as the leading Nazi representative in Austria in the early months of 1935. In his place came Dr. Hermann Neubacher, an old friend of Reinthaller's,[14] and another relative newcomer to the party. Like his predecessor, Neubacher was not enthusiastically received by the Austrian Gauleiter because of his brief association with the party. When Captain Josef Leopold was released from prison in mid-1935, Neubacher found the competition too stiff to overcome. Leopold, after all, was an Altkampfer, and had paid his political dues in the SA. Upon his release from jail, the Captain immediately made claims to the position of Landesleiter of the party. In an effort to bring order to the situation, the Austrian Gauleiter met to arrange an acceptable compromise. Leopold was named Landesleiter, while Neubacher was made the second-in-command and top advisor to the Captain.[15] While both candidates for the position of Austrian leader were not entirely pleased with the situation, they did, in fact, accept the verdict of the Gauleiter and prepared to begin their work in re-organizing the party.

Before the tandem could initiate their plans, both Leopold and Neubacher were arrested by the Austrian police for distributing anti-government propaganda.[16] This naturally threw new light on the subject, and forced the Gauleiter to again choose a leader. Leopold had written a statement before his arrest in which he specifically named the man whom he wished to succeed him.[17] The Gauleiter, however, were not overly eager to

fulfill the Captain's wishes; he had proven to be a less than distinguished politician and more militant than the rather moderate Austrian Gauleiter had anticipated. Rather than relinquish the party leadership to a Leopold clone, the Gauleiter set up a Committee of Leadership with Hubert Klausner, the Gauleiter of Carinthia, as its Chairman.[18]

While the saga of Nazi leadership unfolded during 1935, another story of factionalism was being performed in the lower ranks of the party. The putsch had effected the various party members in contrasting ways. As 1934 drew to a close, the NSDAP had a number of differing branches within it. A good deal of participants, whether they were SS men in Vienna or SA men in the outer regions, had felt betrayed by their "rival" para-military organization. The disunity of the putsch as described in Chapter Four certainly carried over, and drove a wedge between the SA and the SS.

On the other hand, a large section of Nazi party members despised the coup in its entirety, and were infuriated with the violent tendencies of Habicht, Reschny, and the other members of the putsch "braintrust". To them, the revolutionary method was useless and could only be detrimental to the party in general. These moderates, led by Dr. Walter Riehl, the old DAP figure, eagerly accepted the new evolutionary process espoused by Papen and the German government.[19] There remained, however, a radical element in Austria as well. Led by Leopold and with a voice in Berlin, in the person of Dr. Joseph Goebbels, the radical SA and SS members continued to push for a forceful resolution to the

problem.[20] The party in 1936 was a divided one in a number of ways. A concensus could not be reached as to the proper leader of the party, and the only legitimate leader, Leopold, was not suitable to a number of party members because of his militant outlook. Within the party itself, the debate of evolution vs. revolution continued with increasing vigor. Only the discontinuation of funding from Germany could prohibit the radical elements from forcing the issue with the Austrian government. As F.L. Carsten argues,

> . . . it does not seem that the National Socialist underground organization made much progress in 1935-36; it was too much hampered by internal conflicts and by the many arrests of activists.[21]

Problems Within the Austrian Government

The Austrian government, however, was not able to take advantage of the chaotic condition within the Nazi party. While it was true that the government had won a huge public opinion victory in its defeat of both the Marxists and the terrorist Nazis in 1934, Chancellor Schuschnigg did not find himself in a very powerful position after the victory had been won. Once again, Austrian economic conditions proved to be a major thorn in the side of the government, while German economic successes magnified the problems within the Republic. In 1935, only two thirds of those who had held jobs in 1929 were still employed, and that figure would drop even more by the next year. In contrast, Germany was almost back to her pre-depression employment figures in 1935, and closer still in 1936.[22] High Austrian debts, coupled with rising interest rates, increased the

feeling of desperation in the country. Austrians began to look North again, thinking the same quick-fix thoughts that they had had in the 1920s and early '30s. If only the tourist boycott were lifted!! Then more money could flow into Austria, and the timber and agricultural markets in Germany would be available for Austrian trade.[23] During the winter of 1935, the Security Directorate reported that,

> while one couldn't speak of the masses being enthusiastic about National Socialism, the public was nevertheless growing lethargic toward the policies and undeniable dynamism of the Nazis.[24]

While the party was not exactly bringing in new members by the droves, at least it was not encountering any real opposition. One must therefore conclude that with a somewhat healthier economy, the squabbling Nazi party would have been too weak to survive in 1935-36.

The frightful economic conditions within Austria were enough to antagonize other sections of the population as well. In early 1936, Ambassador Papen reported that both the Trade Union Federation and the Freiheitsbund were actively opposed to the policies of the Schuschnigg government. Both social and economic deficiencies were cited as reasons for disagreement, as well as the high Austrian rate of unemployment. Papen viewed these organizations as possible pro-Nazi sympathizers, for Nazi anti-semitic propaganda had caused quite a stir in Vienna. Papen went on to explain that these Labor groups had drawn up a political platform which espoused an Austrian rapprochment with Germany, an appeasing attitude toward the Nazi party, anti-semitic legislation, and the holding of national plebiscites.[25] As is

obvious, dissatisfaction with the government in Austria was not reserved solely to the Nazi party. Few were happy with the situation in 1935-36, and the successes of Germany -- the Saar plebiscite, increased employment, rearmament, and the "victory" in the Rhineland -- only increased the doubts about the Austrian future.

Coupled with the problem of economic instability, the Austrian government suffered another serious defeat, which would seriously hamper her ability to maintain her independence. In April of 1935, France, Great Britain, and Italy had joined to comprise what is now known as the Stressa conference. The Western Powers agreed to demand and protect the independence of Austria, with obvious references to Nazi Germany. Mussolini had long been the protector of the Republic, and the attempted putsch had greatly irritated the Italian leader. But before the year 1935 had come to its conclusion, Mussolini had made a complete turnaround, abandoning both Austria and the Western Powers in favor of closer relations with Germany.

The about-face was largely due to the expansionist reaches of Il Duce in 1935-36. The Italian conflict in Ethiopia did much to alter Mussolini's priorities and alliances. As the fighting in Africa deepened, so, too, did the European opposition toward Italian foreign policy. With France and Great Britain in the lead, the League of Nations pleaded with Mussolini to reconsider his actions against Ethiopia, while the foreign press attacked Italy's gluttonous appetite. Germany, however, refused to join the chorus of denouncements and negotiations for peace. Instead, Hitler ordered that all unsympathetic press comments regarding

the presence of Italy in Ethiopia be stopped immediately.[26] Ethiopian representatives in Germany were denied their requests for loans and arms. Mussolini noted that, "Germany did not support Italy's enemies,"[27] and gravitated toward Germany as an ally. Throughout 1935 and 1936 Mussolini continually moved away from the reprimanding Western Powers and toward the more accepting German foreign policy.

This, of course, could only spell doom for Austria. Along with Mussolini's change of heart came his influence over and approval of German tactics. Schuschnigg recognized that with Germany's conciliatory gestures toward Italy came Mussolini's acceptance of a number of German policies; most importantly, its Austrian policy. Without the support of Italy, Schuschnigg understandably felt somewhat uneasy about his position with regard to the Austrian Nazis and the German government.

The final blow to the Austrian position came in the spring of 1936, when Schuschnigg was "asked" to do something to settle the situation in his country by decreasing the importance and power of the anti-Nazi Heimwehr party by "the new" Mussolini.[28] The next month, in April, Schuschnigg drastically reduced Heimwehr effectiveness both by reinstating conscription (which would deplete the Heimwehr's ranks) and by cutting off financial assistance to the party.[29] Schuschnigg, a Catholic with sentiments similar to those of Dollfuss toward his religion, did not trust the fascist Heimwehr party anyway, and felt no qualms when he officially outlawed the Heimwehr, and all other para-military organizations for that matter, in October.

Regardless of this mistrust, however, Schuschnigg now found himself in a position which all statesmen must dread. His economy was in shambles. His unofficial European protector, Mussolini, had deserted him in favor of his worst enemy. The only other European states capable of sheltering him -- Great Britain and France -- had shown their lack of backbone in March, 1936 when Hitler had rolled, unopposed, into the de-militarized Rhineland. On top of this, the only political organization that had supported him with any kind of clout, the Heimwehr, was now defunct, by Schuschnigg's own hand. Worst of all was the ever-present lurkings of the German government. Schuschnigg's back was, indeed, against the wall.

The Gentlemen's Agreement

The result of these conditions has become known as the Gentleman's Agreement of July 11, 1936. The "treaty" was a compromise of sorts, brought on by Mussolini's insistence and Schuschnigg's lack of backing from any sources, anywhere.

Germany and Austria had struck bargains before the Agreement in 1936. The threat of a Habsburg restoration had produced an arrangement in 1935 whereby the sting of German Press and Propaganda attacks were diluted in return for a public renunciation of any kind of monarchical return. The situation a year later, however, was much worse for Austria. In January, 1936, Mussolini had met with the German Ambassador in Rome to discuss the Italo-Ethiopian crisis. During the course of this conversation, the Prime Minister had remarked on the closer relations between Germany and Italy during the recent months, and

the effect that this new relationship would have on Austrian political affairs. Hassell, the German Ambassador, responded by confirming the German aim of Gleichschaltung, saying that Germany would be more than happy to assure Austria's independence in return for a commitment from Austria to take on a foreign policy in a direct line with Germany. If Austria chose to follow Germany as a kind of satellite, then Germany would quickly agree to support any and all Austrian claims of independence.[30] Mussolini found little with which to disagree, and soon related his feelings to Schuschnigg.

The Austrian Chancellor was now in no position to avoid confrontation with either Germany or Italy -- especially with the recent display of French and British pacifism in the face of fascist expansionism. In March and April, 1936, a scandal involving illegal kickback payments to press organizations, political parties, and civil servants had been traced to high government officials. One of them, the Head of the Government Department of Insurance Supervision, had taken his own life because of the affair.[31] As a result of the ensuing uproar, Schuschnigg was forced to re-consider the government's position against the inclusion of opposition party members into the cabinet. Some kind of a change was needed. Much to the dismay of a number of high ranking Austrian officials, a list of oppostionists, headed by Arthur Seyss-Inquart and Edmund Glaise-Horstenau, had been drawn up for just this purpose. To Franz von Papen, the moment for making an Agreement was drawing near.[32]

Negotiations began in the spring of 1936, and ran through

the early summer weeks. Finally, on July 11, the Agreement was signed by both the German and Austrian participants in an arrangement quite similar to the one discussed by Mussolini and Ambassador Hassell back in January. On the surface, the agreement expressed three basic statements: the German government officially recognized the full sovereignty of the Austrian state; each government proclaimed that the internal political structure of the other country was an internal affair, and that neither would interfere in each other's political sphere; and the Austrian government declared that it would "maintain a policy based always on the principle that Austria acknowledges herself to be a German state."[33] On the surface, this agreement looked like a smashing success for Schuschnigg, as well as a resounding defeat for Hitler. Along with Germany's recognition of Austrian Independence came the lifting of the tourist ban, which seemed like the answer to Austrian economic difficulties, as well as the ending of Hitler's most effective pro-Anschluss tool. In receiving Austria's reaffirmation of her "German-ness", the Reich had also given-in to Austrian demands for the restriction of German-Austrian Nazi connections. Hitler, at first, was completely opposed to the Agreement.[34]

But the treaty extended far beyond this public stage. Ten other points were agreed upon by the two governments, many of which were very much to Germany's advantage. The first point of the Agreement officially allowed German nationals to pursue their political beliefs in Austria as long as they did not interfere with Austrian politics. While a nice gesture by Schuschnigg, this only haunted the Chancellery in the following years, for it

allowed German Nazis to enter into the country and be available to the Austrian party members for any number of services. Points six and seven cleared the bans set by the two states during the Dollfuss crisis, and reinstated both the tourist trade and new trade quotas between the two countries. But most important of all was the ninth point, in which Schuschnigg allowed the problematic oppostionists a chance to form Austrian politics. This point, in two parts, first stated that the Austrian government agreed to give amnesty to all national political prisoners who had not committed public crimes. Its second clause declared that the National Opposition in Austria would be permitted to,

> . . . participate in political responsibility; they shall be persons who enjoy the personal confidence of the Federal Chancellor and whose selection he reserves to himself.[35]

Among their responsibilities would include the,

> . . . internal pacification of the National Opposition and for its participation in the shaping of the political will in Austria.[36]

With this acceptance of oppositionists (i.e. Nazi sympathizers) in the government, Hitler's (and Papen's) evolutionary aims for Gleichschaltung had succeeded. Anti-government personalities were now to be brought into positions of power, and a great number of Nazi party members were to be unleashed onto the Austrian public by official decree. When Hitler realized the success of the Papen negotiations, he quickly and happily accepted the Agreement.

The Gentleman's Agreement in 1936 concluded the second stage of the move toward Anschluss. Many factors played into this phase, and prohibited Schuschnigg from capitalizing on the

disgraceful Dollfuss assassination. The Nazi party in Austria was ripped apart by leadership feuds and the moderate vs. radical debate in 1935-36. Over 17,000 Nazis had been arrested, and another 40,000 had fled to German soil. The party, leaderless and without a popular base of support, seemed ready to collapse. Schuschnigg, however, could not muster the strength necessary to destroy his enemies. The economic conditions within his own state destroyed any possibility for broadening his own base of support, and the dissolution of the Heimwehr did little to strengthen his position. Mussolini's dessertion only heigthened Austria's precarious predicament, and helped push the Federal Chancellor into the waiting arms of the basically silent German government. While the party in Austria was certainly not at its strongest, Schuschnigg felt a good deal of pressure from its mere existence. This explains his reluctance to ride out the storm of Mussolini's departure. Germany, not yet rearmed, was not about to invade Austria, and Schuschnigg knew it. His fears centered around his lack of support among the people, and the thought that the "dynamism" of the NSDAP could be enough to actively turn them against him. From July 11, 1936 until March 11, 1938, the party would increase its base of popular support and become more daring, finally pushing Schuschnigg into Germany's deadly arms once again.

NOTES

1. Pauley; Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis; pg. 145
2. Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series C, vol. V, no. 85, pg. 148
3. DGFP, Series C, vol. V, no. 85
4. DGFP, Series C, vol. IV, no. 232
5. Pauley, pg. 138
6. Pauley, pg. 139
7. DGFP, Series C, vol. III, no. 533
8. DGFP, Series C, vol. V, no. 297
9. DGFP, Series C, vol. IV, no. 232
10. Pauley, pg. 145
11. DGFP, Series C, vol. IV, no. 85
12. Pauley, pg. 148
13. Ibid, pg. 149
14. Ibid, pg. 151; Carsten;Fascist Movements in Austria; pg. 295
15. Carsten, pg. 296
16. Pauley, pg. 151
17. Carsten, pg. 296
18. Ibid, pg. 296
19. Ibid, pg. 294
20. Ibid, pg. 295
21. Ibid, pg. 299
22. Pauley, pg. 155; See Friedrich Hertz, The Economic Problems of the Danubian States, pg. 147
23. Carsten, pg. 271-272
24. Pauley, pg. 156
25. DGFP, Series C, vol. V, no. 172
26. Gehl; Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss; pg. 118
27. Quoted in Gehl, pg. 118
28. Pauley, pg. 164
29. Ibid, pg. 164; Carsten, pg. 276
30. DGFP, Series C, vol. IV, no. 485
31. DGFP, Series C, vol. V, no 288, footnote 7
32. DGFP, Series C, vol. V, no. 294
33. DGFP, Series C, vol. V, editor's note, pg. 759
34. Pauley, pg. 166
35. DGFP, Series C, vol. V, editor's note, pg. 758
36. DGFP, Series C, vol. V, editor's note, pg. 758

6

STAGE THREE

The signing of the Gentlemen's Agreement broke the stalemate that had frozen relations between the German and Austrian governments, and had frustrated the most die-hard Austrian Nazis since the failed putsch. The first stage of the Anschluss situation illustrated the differing opinions within the German government, and was ultimately characterized by restraining actions from the Reich whenever the overzealous Austrian Nazis pushed the issue to violence. The second stage, that of extreme caution, served to aggravate the party, and kept the terror tactics (so prevalent before the putsch) to a minimum. Fortunately for Germany and the Austrian Nazis, neither Mussolini nor the Austrian government under Schuschnigg was able to capitalize on this period of uncertainty, and the Nazi forces were allowed to remain a politically influential organization, although not nearly as vocal as it had been during the first stage. The Gentlemen's Agreement in July, 1936 enabled Germany to gradually rebuild a foreign policy which could actively, yet still evolutionarily, follow a path leading toward Anschluss. While it was not an outwardly aggressive policy, the actions taken by the rejuvenated German Foreign Ministry during this third stage of action certainly suggest somewhat of a mild return to the policy of pressure taken by the German government in 1933-1934.

The Austrian Nazi party, while not nearly as active in 1936-

1937 as it had been in 1933-34, gradually reinforced its hold on the position as the chief member of the national opposition, and increased its political influence from the second stage years. The party was, however, filled with dissent, and suffered from intense bickering between the various factions within the organization. In a way, it is remarkable that the party was able to survive at all; the squabbles and bruised egos within the NSDAP certainly hampered their own efforts of achieving a union and did little to improve the bargaining position of the German government. The final irony of the Anschluss story, however, is that this divided party was the most influential factor in bringing Chancellor Schuschnigg to Berchtesgaden in February 1938; a meeting which directly led to the realization of the Austro-German union.

The Effects of the Gentlemen's Agreement

The meeting of July 11 temporarily produced a positive result for all of the parties involved. The Agreement, which allowed German tourists to once again visit their Austrian neighbors, was an immediate boost to the Republic's economy. By the end of 1936, the German tourist trade had accounted for over two million schillings in the economy, making prospects for 1937 brighter than they had been since 1928-29. 200,000 unemployed Austrians were successful in finding new jobs, as the production of industrial goods increased a full 30% in 1937.[1] Moreover, Austria had the German guarantee for her independence in writing, with the seemingly minute concession of agreeing to conduct her

foreign policy in a German manner, which in itself seemed quite vague. With an increasingly improving economy and an internationally recognized guarantee of good conduct from the Reich, the independence of Austria seemed stable and secure.

The German government, likewise, could not frown upon the initial results of the Agreement. The lifting of the tourist ban, while obviously having a positive effect on the Austrian economy, also served to increase the "fraternization" between German and Austrian Nazis. The respective Gauleiter in each section of Austria were sent messages informing the party to compile lists of hotels and inns in each Austrian district which were run by owners sympathetic to the Nazi cause.[2] As a result, whenever a German tourist with strong National Socialist leanings (or agents from Berlin) took their vacation money into the country, they could also spread information and propaganda. Furthermore, the Agreement served to re-establish, however tentatively, cordial relations between the two governments. Most important in this sense was the Schuschnigg concession to include members of the opposition in the cabinet,[3] a massive step toward the Gleichschaltung so desired by Hitler throughout his political life.

The effect of the Agreement had two effects on the Austrian National Socialist party. On the one hand, no one could deny that the amnesty of over 17,000 Austrian Nazis from prison[4] was an effective means of pumping new blood into the rather stagnent organization. Among those released were a number of prominent Nazi figures; specifically Captain Josef Leopold, who was ready to make his claim to the leadership position within the party.

Moreover, the language of the Gentlemen's Agreement, which ensured the legal standing of the NSDAP, was vague enough to offer the Nazis a good deal of flexibility in their anti-government activities. Bruce Pauley argues that,

> By the fall of 1936 the Austrian Nazis felt bolder than ever. They were convinced that any attempt to suppress them would be construed in Berlin as a violation of the July Agreement. Even slightly anti-Nazi speeches could be so interpreted by German and Austrian Nazis.[5]

This new ability to voice their political opinions was the first opportunity for such expressions since the early days of the Dollfuss regime. After three years of forced underground work and silence, the Agreement offered the Nazis the chance to speak their minds.

Not all was rosy in the Nazi camp, however. Friedrich Rainer, a leading moderate Nazi, expressed the general feeling of dissatisfaction from within the party.[6] The negotiations from whence the Agreement came had been held by Papen and Schuschnigg without the slightest imput from the Austrian party. No one had asked them of their wishes, and no one had invited the party to join in the treaty. The Agreement shocked a number of Austrian Nazis, especially after swallowing the humiliation of defeat after the July putsch. Jurgen Gehl notes that,

> Not only had they failed to overturn the regime, but Schuschnigg's government was now firmly established, and partner in an official agreement with the German government.[7]

Many party members could not understand the reasoning behind the Agreement, and only saw that Germany had made concessions in the name of the Austrian National Socialists without so much as allowing them to be represented in the discussions. While the

Gentlemen's Agreement provided the party with a greater degree of freedom than they had enjoyed since 1933, the guarentee of Austrian Independence and the neglecting of the party by the German government disappointed and disillusioned the Austrian NSDAP, and served only to frustrate them.

Mussolini and the Italian government reacted with the memory of German sympathy during the Ethiopian crisis fresh in their minds. Mussolini was pleased with the new situation, and expressed confidence that the Agreement would put an end to the tension between Germany and Austria.[8] Germany's affirmation of Austrian independence went far in impressing the Italian leader; he felt as if this concession deserved an Italian response, and thus he abandoned his support for the Heimwehr when it ran into problems with Schuschnigg in October of 1936. These flirtations of friendship with Germany were cemented barely a week after the Agreement had been signed, due to the commencement of the Spanish Civil War on July 17. General Franco's appeal to Mussolini fell upon attentive ears, while Hitler remained somewhat aloof from the entire situation. As Italy enthusiastically pumped arms, money, and manpower into the Iberian peninsula in an effort to destroy the Republican forces, Hitler cleverly kept his hands in the affair only enough so that the war's continuation could be ensured. As the conflict plodded along, Italy began to reel from the demands placed upon her by the Spanish fascists, and was forced to turn to Hitler for economic, military, and emotional support.[9] As a result, Mussolini was drawn further into Hitler's clutches and at the same time was forced to sacrifice his

commitment to Austria as her protector. Italy needed Germany much more than she needed Austria.

The Gentlemen's Agreement and the ensuing events during the summer of 1936 painted a complex picture for the three sides of the Anschluss triangle. Austria benefitted from the economic gains made due to the lifting of the tourist ban, and she had won a psychological victory in bringing the Germans to publicly recognize and respect her independence. On the other hand, she now found herself quite alone in the world, now that Mussolini had abandoned the Republic in favor of Hitler's military might. The Nazi party in Austria, meanwhile, was strengthened in numbers by the release from prison of thousands of her members, some of whom held great importance in the organization. The Agreement gave the NSDAP access to political expression, and gave them a chance to participate in the government. Furthermore, the wording of the Agreement was ambiguous enough to allow the Nazis to push their luck with little fear of suppression, which could be argued to be in violation of the treaty. But the party could not help to feel left out in the cold. It had not been invited to participate in discussions which greatly effected the organization, and it had been force-fed the Agreement as something which needed to be accepted by the party in order for total success to be reached.

Finally, the German government could look at its position with a good deal of satisfaction. The lifting of the tourist ban allowed German Nazis the opportunity to "mingle" with the Austrian Nazis, and to further their common goal of Anschluss. Furthermore, Schuschnigg had agreed to recognize the party in

Austria, which was now to become the vehicle on which German policy could be implemented. Mussolini was a puppet, rather than a protector, and Papen had cleverly managed to ease the European tension by formally declaring Germany's commitment to Austrian independence (which, needless to say, pleased France and Great Britain), while not giving away anything concrete to enforce this declaration. With the Agreement signed, Germany could now pursue a course which would gradually wipe out the Austrian state she had just officially supported. As Chancellor Schuschnigg sadly observed,

> The real reason for all the difficulties was that Germany tacitly had an entirely different conception of the object of the agreement from that of Austria. For us it was the maintenance and for Germany the elimination of Austria as an entity.[10]

Germany and the Austrian Nazis

As summer turned to fall, the two pro-Anschluss participants in the struggle for Austria began to experiment with their new-found status. Both the German Foreign Ministry and the Austrian party reacted to the new situation with great energy and thought. For Germany, the Agreement tore down the great barriers imposed in 1933, and allowed them the opportunity to sharply increase their use of the now legalized party in Austria. The party, however, was now thrown into the throes of chaos: the sudden influx of over 17,000 Nazis drastically rearranged the situation seen during the second stage. Among those released were the leading Nazis who, as is the case with too many cooks, spoiled the broth by struggling against each other rather than against

the Austrian government they were trying to overthrow. Both the German government and the Austrian NSDAP continued to push toward the ultimate goal of Anschluss; but the road was not to be an easy one.

The basic German outlook toward Austria in 1936-37 must be recognized as differing only slightly from that of 1935-36. While new ideas and aims were conceived during this third stage, they were all based on the evolutionary precedent set two years before, after Dollfuss' assassination. The plan was still for the Austrian Nazis to lay low until the time was right, grabbing as much popular support as possible for an Anschluss along the way. Hitler was adamant about the evolutionary tact of his foreign policy. The Foreign Office had received reports that a number of Austrian Nazis, visiting Berlin for the 1936 Summer Olympics, had made references to Hitler which connected Germany with the party. Hitler was infuriated by this lack of discretion and reaffirmed his commitment to the policy of non-communication between the Austrian Nazis and the Third Reich. He declared that any Austrian party member found communicating with Germans in Germany would be expelled from the party.[11] In conjunction with this order, the Foreign Ministry was most careful to discourage any Nazi attempts to show overt signs of aggression to the Austrian government. The GFM realized that the party was anxious to rebuild and resume its action against Schuschnigg, but the Foreign Office remained firm in its pursuit of an evolutionary policy. Rather than send arms, or even large sums of money to the party, the GFM chose to handle the party with kid gloves,

leaving the moderate von Papen to negotiate the details of the Agreement with the Austrian government.[12] Germany did not wish to take any chances.

Papen, himself, had his own ideas about how the Anschluss could and should take place. His plan centered around four main points, all of which clearly emphasized his own beliefs in the evolutionary process. The first of these ideas was to bring about a change in the Ministry of Security. In keeping with the Gentlemen's Agreement, Schuschnigg was obliged to include oppositionists into the government. Papen wished to put one of these anti-government cabinet members in the position of Police commander, to ensure some kind of inner assistance if and when times got rough. The second goal was to make sure that none of the men brought into the cabinet was a member of the Austrian Nazi party. Instead, "nationalist personalities" were to be used, in order to separate the NSDAP from the swirl of diplomacy: with no Nazis in the cabinet, the base of support for Anschluss would seem even broader than it really was, especially with oppostionists in power who sympathized completely with the Nazis, but who were not official members. The third object of Papen's plan was that of incorporating the National Socialists into the Fatherland Front, in an effort to camouflage Nazi actions within the official government party. The fourth and final aim was to use, "economic pressure and patient psychological treatment with slowly intensified pressure directed at changing the regime."[13] While these schemes were certainly devious and directed toward ignoring the solemn non-intervention promise of the Gentlemen's Agreement, these points certainly cannot be misconstrued as a

radical approach to the situation. It was, instead, the same type of gradual Gleichschaltung that had been pursued by Papen since his arrival in Vienna after the putsch. German policy had not changed much; it still leaned toward the gradual inclusion of pro-Anschluss Austrians into the government by legal means.

In November of 1936 these four aims had their first opportunity to be discussed. With Italy's ice-cold shoulder offering no sympathy for Schuschnigg and his cabinet, the Chancellor's State secretary, Guido Schmidt, was eagerly dispatched to Berlin after an invitation had been received from Germany. Ambassador Papen had been working with the Austrian government to reach an understanding in order to bring the two states closer together during the Autumn months of 1936, and the text had been more or less hammered out by the time Schmidt arrived. The Austrian Foreign Minister brought with him the sentiments of his Chancellor, which were quite pro-German. The combination of Mussolini's departure and the success of the Gentlemen's Agreement had encouraged Schuschnigg to negotiate with Germany and obtain stable relations with her, rather than depend on the unreliable protection of Benito Mussolini.[14] The basic aim of the Protocol was to expand trade between Germany and Austria, as well as allow Austrian refugees to return to their homeland if in economic difficulties. The proposal also dealt with the furthering of cultural ties and the coordination of scholarly and media exchanges. Also important to the discussion was the ability of Germans to express their political beliefs while in Austria (in the form of the Hitler salute) and the

acceptance of Austrian innkeepers to publicly display the flag of the Reich whenever German guests patronized their hotels.[15] While the issues at hand were not earth-shattering in their importance, the simple fact that the two sides were cooperating says much for the improved relations between Germany and Austria.

An important addendum to the Protocol story must be considered, however. The evolutionary style employed by the Germans in November 1936 was accompanied by diplomatic pressures which had not been seen since the days of Dollfuss. As Papen negotiated the terms of the Protocol in early November, the German Foreign Ministry angrily requested that Schmidt be informed of German displeasure over Austrian implementation of the July 11 Agreement. Austria was accused of hesitating in fulfilling her part of the bargain; not all Nazi political prisoners had been released, nor had the Austrian refugees been officially amnestied. Furthermore, the Hitler salute and Nazi insignias were still denied to German citizens. Germany's man in Vienna, Wilhelm Keppler, was directed to bring Germany's dissatisfaction to Schmidt's attention.[16] This slight nudge from Berlin was, indeed, a maneuvre that had not been used for a number of years. But this kind of activity from the Foreign Office would gradually increase as the months passed and the eventual Anschluss drew nearer. While the mild push from the GFM was not a major influence in tipping the scales of the November Protocol one way or the other (and was not taken as an insult by the Austrian government), the use of such diplomatic tactics can be seen to have begun here, in early November of 1936. From then on, German pressure increased gradually, until the diplomatic

tools of the trade -- letters, telegrams, and (most importantly) telephones -- could be enough to destroy the independence of a nation; with the help of forces inside the state, of course.

Throughout most of the third stage, however, these forces within the state did not appear to be unified enough to exact the kind of internal pressure necessary to bring about an effective Anschluss. The Austrian party was demolished by factionalism, suffered from leadership struggles, and was split by personality and ideology conflicts. The same rivalry (that had split the party during the second stage) between the moderates, now led by Hubert Klausner, the Carinthian Gauleiter, and the radicals, with Leopold at the helm, still existed in the summer and fall of 1936, and would intensify as the third stage progressed. Due to the evolutionary policy of the Reich and Schuschnigg's fear of radical elements in his government, the radical faction found little support and practically no place to express its desires. When Schuschnigg appointed Catholic oppositionists (Seyss-Inquart and Glaise-Horstenau) to his cabinet, the radicals discovered, much their chagrin, that the German Foreign Ministry was quite satisfied with the Schuschnigg selections. As the months dragged on, and the more violent Nazis met with censure from their own German superiors, desparate plans began to hatch; plans which would go a long way to make Schuschnigg play into Hitler's hands.

The leadership debate epitomizes the problems experienced by the party in 1936-37. The release of Nazis arrested before, during, and after the July putsch only increased the tension over who would finally emerge as the definite leader of the Austrian

NSDAP. Leopold had spent most of the two years following the putsch behind bars, along with Neubacher and the other 17,000 political prisoners. During Leopold's imprisonment Hubert Klausner had risen to act as the deputy leader by the vote of the Austrian Gauleiter.[17] Among those who helped the Carinthian leader were two young Nazis, Dr. Friedrich Rainer and Odilo Globocnik, who were both well-educated and energetic. These men were appointed to lead the political and organizational aspects of the NSDAP, and were so effective that when Klausner briefly spent time in prison, the two young men were able to control the entire party by themselves.[18]

Naturally, when Leopold was released during the summer of 1936, questions arose as to who would be the legitimate leader of the party. Klausner had held the post for roughly eighteen months, and had at least kept the organization from self-destructing. Rainer and Globocnik had shown flashes of excellent ability as Klausner's right-hand men, and as substitute leaders during Klausner's short stay in prison. They also had youth on their side -- neither one was over thirty five years old. With Leopold's return came the obvious question of "who will lead us?"

This initial problem was solved without a serious struggle in the end of July, 1936. One week after Leopold's release, Rainer and Globocnik pledged their loyalty to the Captain who, "modestly referred to himself as merely the federal president of a Rainer cabinet."[19] But Leopold did not trust the two leaders. They were, in fact, in contact with German authorities (who favored them because of their approval of the July Agreement) and had their own plans for assuming control of the party. In

September, Leopold dismissed Rainer, Globocnik, and a number of other young Nazi party members.[20] These dismissals dismayed the German Legation, which saw them as discouraging new membership in the party. The last thing the German Foreign Ministry wanted was a split between the old guard and the newer, more energetic National Socialists.[21] Although Leopold was warned not to disrupt the delicate balance within the party, the intense Austrian leader plunged ahead and splintered the already fragmented party to an even greater degree by dismissing Klausner in early October. But Leopold was not completely alone in his feelings of distrust for his interim successors. In January of 1937, the Austrian Gauleiter met in Vienna and gave him their support (but also expressed a desire to come to terms with the Carinthians: Rainer, Globocnik, and Klausner). Barely a week later, Heinrich Himmler named Leopold the official leader of the Austrian SS (as long as the latter was subordinate to Himmler). Furthermore, on January 31 and February 1 the Austrian Captain was cordially entertained by both Goehring and Hitler.[22] Leopold seemed to have the Austrian party, with the notable exception of the Carinthians, at his disposal.

The National Opposition and the Split in the NSDAP

As soon as Leopold's power appeared to be consolidating, however, a new set of rivals appeared on the scene; rivals who were much tougher to displace than the Carinthians. These were not Nazi party members, so they could not be disciplined by the Leopold-led NSDAP. They could not be "disposed of" because of

their high visibility and obvious association with the Reich. The rise of Arthur Seyss-Inquart and Edmund Glaise-Horstenau completely undermined Leopold's hold on the direction of the party, and ultimately led to his final dismissal in 1938.

Arthur Seyss-Inquart, perhaps the most important Austrian figure during the actual Anschluss in 1938, was not a Nazi. He was, instead, a practicing lawyer with nationalist leanings, who was interested in the idea of a union with Germany, but also in maintaining Austrian autonomy at the same time. As has been previously illustrated, the only remaining major Austrian party which endorsed an Anschluss with the Reich in 1933 was the National Socialist party. While he agreed with the idea of a union, Seyss was opposed to any violent measures which could be used to accelerate the project.[23] Naturally, his moderation pleased those in the GFM, and his non-Nazi status made him a prime candidate for a position in the cabinet in both Schuschnigg's and Papen's eyes. Seyss' non-Nazi status helped him and the NSDAP immensely; because he had nationalist feelings, he could represent the Nazi party. But because he was not an official Nazi he was not arrested or persecuted by the Austrian government. Seyss-Inquart became a valuable liason between the German and Austrian governments, and often received serious consideration from Schuschnigg on matters which, if they had been proposed by Nazis, would have been otherwise ignored by the Federal Chancellor.[24] During the months of caution in 1935-36, Seyss was free to act on behalf of the party because he was not a Nazi, and therefore a legitimate political personality.[25] As 1937 slowly progressed, Papen and Seyss, the two moderates,

sucked the strength out of Leopold, and relegated the Austrian party to the role of an annoying trouble-maker.

Indeed, the instances of Nazi aggression in Austria increased markedly throughout 1937. Demonstrations were organized to exhibit pro-German sentiment in Vienna, while numerous plots were uncovered implicating both the German Foreign Ministry and the Austrian NSDAP. The appointment of Dr. Leopold Tavs to the position of Viennese Gauleiter by Captain Leopold only served to increase the problem. Tavs was a noted radical with violent intensions. With Tavs in a position of power, the situation became increasingly explosive.[26]

In the face of increased Nazi activity, Schuschnigg proceeded to fulfill his portion of the July Agreement by beginning the process of choosing the oppositionist members of his cabinet. Naturally, the radical Leopold was not a consideration; nor were the more moderate Nazis for that matter. Their positions as Nazis made them unpalatable for Schuschnigg, who wished to incorporate as moderate an oppositionist as he possibly could. Arthur Seyss-Inquart quickly became the first choice of the Federal Chancellor, and he found no arguments from the German Foreign Office. The choice of Seyss-Inquart was then cemented by one of the more blatant acts of NSDAP defiance seen in 1937.

On May 2, Austrian government forces raided an organizational office of the Austrian NSDAP. Among the booty confiscated by the authorities were; papers showing conversations between Nazi leaders and Reich officials, evidence of Nazi financial aid

from Berlin, anti-government propaganda orginating from within Germany, addresses of Austrians involved in smuggling communiques between Germany and Austria, and correspondences between Austrian SS and German SS officials.[27] Germany was now caught red-handed. She was purposefully interfering with the existence of the Austrian state by supporting a subversive organization which was intent upon destroying the Republic of Austria. This was an obvious violation of the Gentlemen's Agreement. One would think that this would give Schuschnigg the perfect opportunity to completely discredit and humiliate the German government, and to finally destroy the dangerous Austrian National Socialist party. But Schuschnigg refused to do so. How could he possibly gain from such an act? Italy, now engulfed in the Spanish Civil War and German aid, was of no use to Austria. France and Britain were not yet ready to stand up to Hitler (as was evidenced by the occupation of the Rhineland, Germany's open violation of the disarmament portion of the Treaty of Versailles, and her defiant departure from the League of Nations). Austria could not withstand the economic pressure that could be applied by Germany. Moreover, the refusal to fulfill his own part of the Gentlemen's Agreement could be enough to push Germany to use force, with the excuse that the Treaty had been violated. Schuschnigg reasoned that the only way to approach a peaceful situation with Hitler and the Nazis was to mix appeasement with resistance. Such was the approach he took. Schuschnigg appeased Hitler by agreeing to appoint an oppositionist in his cabinet, even though it was obvious that German intentions were not in Austria's best interests. Yet he resisted Hitler by not completely giving in to

the NSDAP demands of appointing a Nazi as the oppositionist representative. As it turned out, Schuschnigg's decision to bring Seyss into his cabinet as the State Counsellor (not a ministerial position) on June 16 only furthered his own precarious position.

The admission of Seyss into the cabinet obviously did not sit well with Leopold. He had been trying, unsuccessfully, to get himself named as the official representative of the oppositionists. But Schuschnigg, and Papen for that matter, were quite cool to this idea. Radical elements were vehemently opposed by the Federal Chancellor, and the choice of Seyss, the moderate, not only met the major prerequisite set down by Schuschnigg, but also conformed to the wishes of Papen. Leopold was furious. He had so desperately wanted to show his party's strength (and his own importance) by landing a cabinet position. But Seyss-Inquart, the non-Nazi outsider, had ruined things for him. As Gehl notes,

> His (Leopold's) vain attempts to obtain recognition for the party reveals that the Austrian Nazis could not achieve success without pressure from the outside, and that they were too weak to force recognition from the Austrian government on their own account.[28]

Indeed, the Austrian party was not a member of the government. Schuschnigg would have nothing to do with them, and Papen had always preferred the idea of non-Nazis in the government to real Nazis. This combination shut Leopold out of power, and only heightened his already high feeling of alienation. The proud Captain, insulted by his lack of recognition, turned on both Seyss-Inquart and Papen.

Leopold had begun his tirade as early as May, 1937, when Papen had officially accepted the idea of allowing Seyss to represent the party in the government. Leopold, in a fit of rage, broke off all communications with the German Ambassador, and forbade his followers to deal with Papen in any way whatsoever.[29] Papen, in turn, dissociated himself from Leopold, thereby completing the break between the party and Germany.[30] Leopold's followers, in reaction to Papen's retaliatory action, responded by spreading accusations against Papen, claiming that intrigue and personal gains were of more importance to the non-Nazi Ambassador than was the ultimate success of the Austro-German Anschluss.[31] To make matters worse, Leopold had confronted Seyss-Inquart upon the latter's appointment into the government in June. Leopold offered his cooperation only if Seyss would agree to accept a subordinate role to the Altkampfer. Seyss-Inquart naturally refused such a generous proposition, and quickly aligned himself with the moderate elements within the Nazi party.[32]

The inclusion of Seyss-Inquart and Edmund Glaise-Horstenau (a historian who shared Seyss' moderate position -- Schuschnigg agreed to accept Glaise-Horstenau because he was "most harmless")[33] paid immediate dividends for the Anschluss cause -- at least in the eyes of the German Foreign Ministry. On July 5, Seyss, Glaise-Horstenau, State secretary Schmidt, and Schuschnigg met to discuss the process by which the July Agreement could be completely fulfilled. Eleven issues were agreed upon, most of which benefitted the German cause. Among the concessions made by the Austrian government was a declaration assuring the legality

of the Austrian branch of the German NSDAP. Also included in the conference were agreements to lift restrictions on the German media, permission to resume sales of Mein Kampf in Austria, and the right for German nationals to wear swastikas while in Austria.[34] Gradually, the German government was sifting its way into Austrian affairs. The Gentlemen's Agreement had broken the stalemate, and the moderate German policy was succeeding.

With the Austrian agreement to allow Germany a greater hand in her affairs, Hitler moved to exploit the situation. On July 12, one week after the meeting between Schuschnigg and the nationalists, German State secretary Wilhelm Keppler was appointed by the Fuehrer "to handle questions connected with Austria in relation to the party."[35] Keppler was informed that his mission was to

> . . . issue appropriate instructions to the leaders of the Austrian Party to prevent unnecessary trips to the Reich and not . . . make it appear as if the Austrian Party were receiving instructions from the Reich which are contrary to the agreements made here.[36]

Keppler was also assigned to supervise the Hilfswerk (which was still acting as the benefactor for Austrian refugees) and the Austrian Legion in Germany.[37] Schuschnigg's acceptance of both the July Agreement and then the secondary discussions a year later were huge concessions in Hitler's eyes, and he jumped at the chance to get Germany back into Austrian affairs with the same vitality as had been shown during the very early days of his reign.

Leopold, meanwhile, was incensed. The addition of Keppler to the scene only made things worse for him. With Keppler

involved, Leopold's influence would surely decline (as it eventually did). The Altkampfer briefly sulked, and then included Keppler to his list of untouchables, joining Papen and Seyss-Inquart.[38] Keppler, however, viewed Leopold not as a dangerous element, but rather as the leader of a group of people who shared a differing opinion on the issue of Anschluss. As Leopold blustered about his rivals' lack of toughness and commitment, Keppler soothingly encouraged Seyss to smooth over the tensions between the radicals and the moderates.[39]

This request was easier said than done. During a demonstration held to illustrate the bond between German and Austrian ex-servicemen, radical Nazi forces in the crowd began to cause trouble. Papen, who had agreed to speak at the rally, ended his address abruptly as a form of protesting the disobediant Nazis. The disruption continued with increasing volume until the Austrian police were forced to disperse the gathering, much to the embarrassment of the German Ambassador.[40] Upon hearing of the incident, Hitler was initially furious; the Austrians were suppressing the NSDAP in direct violation of the Gentlemen's Agreement!! Only Papen could dissuade Hitler from taking retaliatory measures. The party, regardless of the moderation espoused by Seyss, Papen, and now Keppler, was as vociferous as ever.

The German High Command, however, was still adamant about the need for an evolutionary process toward an Austro-German union. On October 1, Hitler, Goehring, and von Neurath met to discuss an upcoming conference with Mussolini in which the topic of Austrian independence would most surely come up. Hitler

expressed his dissatisfaction with Goehring's severe stand against Austrian legitimacy. The Fuehrer's position was unmistakably clear:

> Germany should cause no explosion of the Austrian problem in the foreseeable future, but that we should continue to seek an evolutionary solution. We must merely obtain assurance that, in case the Austrian question were exploded by another party, intervention on the part of Germany would be possible.[41]

While Germany was to stay on the moderate path, she also needed to claim Austria as her domain. Any other state bold enough to obstruct the path Hitler was taking would only make matters worse; Germany would invade. The Austrian Party was certainly not forgotten by Hitler; Leopold was not to be received by either the Fuehrer or the Foreign Minister. This, now, presented a problem for Germany; the conference was in agreement that, ". . . we on our part should not overthrow Schuschnigg without the certainty of a suitable successor."[42] But with Leopold's quickly falling star, no able Nazi seemed in position to take control of the Austrian government if Germany were to be invited into the country. Yet the German desire for an evolutionary conclusion to the Anschluss push was by no means ambiguous: Goehring's threats of invasion were to be stopped, and plans for any kind of action against Schuschnigg were to be postponed until an adequate replacement could be found to represent the wishes of the German government.

Meanwhile, Schuschnigg was not exactly enamored with his German counterparts. By mid-October, the Federal Chancellor was reported to be adamantly opposed to the Nazi party in Austria, and considered it to be the most dangerous enemy of the Austrian

people. Rumors were flying throughout Vienna that a restoration of the old Habsburg Monarchy was being considered, which would negate the need for a cabinet and destroy the legality of all parties in Austria.[43] Schuschnigg was justifiably afraid of both his German neighbors and the political opposition in Austria. By suggesting a restoration, Austria was now openly defying Germany, and was clearly violating the Gentlemen's Agreement (which provided for oppositionist inclusion into the government).

Taking this threat to German Anschluss hopes into consideration, the meeting held by Hitler and his generals on November 5, 1937 must be carefully examined. In this meeting, now known as the Hossbach Conference, Hitler outlined his ideas on the timetable necessary to acquire the "lebensraum" he so desparately wanted.[44] Those in attendance included Field Marshall von Blomberg, General von Fritsch, Admiral Raeder, Goehring, and Neurath; the meeting obviously had a definite military tint to it. The details of the meeting have been described by others with great precision, so it is not necessary to dwell on each particular point stressed by Hitler during his monolog. It is important to note in this study, however, that Hitler was explicit with regard to his attitude toward Austria: before the arrival of 1943-45, both she and Czechoslovakia would have to be incorporated into the Reich in order to strategically eliminate them from pursuing any kind of military action against Germany when the inevitable conflict with France began. Hitler also claimed that Austria's agricultural strength would be of the utmost importance to the German war effort, therefore making her

a principal character in German foreign policy.[46]

Yet no where in the memorandum written by Hossbach (Hitler's secretary) does Hitler mention any kind of military action against the Austrian state. While Austria represented a military problem if Germany was to fight France (being neighbors, Austria flanked the Reich), Hitler did not stress any military action to negate the danger from the south. He would only go so far as to say that by 1943-45, when Germany would be forced to fight France regardless of the international situation, the Anschluss between the Reich and the Republic would have to take place. Although Schuschnigg was contemplating restoration, Hitler chose to stay on the course of evolution and not press his adversary. He was, after all, giving Schuschnigg six to eight years to accept the German offer of union by using 1943-45 as his long-term goal.

While the Hossbach Conference cannot, or at least should not, be considered a "blueprint" for Hitler's foreign policy, it is a fundamental piece in Hitler's foreign policy puzzle. Hitler had obviously anticipated the intricacies of world affairs, and had mapped out certain scenarios which corresponded with each of the possible situations he foresaw. He was planning for war and planning on conquest; to that there is no doubt. But he was not laying down the guidelines to be used in the next war, nor was he trying to dupe his military men into agreeing with his cry for more armaments in an attempt to oust Hjalmar Schacht (as A.J.P. Taylor would like us to believe). After all, the only reference to economic affairs is the last sentence of the minutes: "The second part of the conference was concerned with concrete questions of armaments."[47] Obviously this conversation was not

the most important part of the meeting, and was a simple corollary to the scenarios set down by Hitler. All that he was saying was that he knew there would soon be a conflict, that Germany would be involved, and that if Germany wanted to succeed in that struggle she would have to protect her flanks from the growing Czech and Austrian armies. He was alerting his subordinates of this and preparing them for the oncoming trouble, as any good Commander-in-Chief would do. To keep his generals in the dark would only complicate matters when decisive actions would need to be taken. The Hossbach Conference did not accelerate actions against Austria; it only clarified Hitler's general aims and reasons behind his aims. In retrospect, by abstaining from reacting violently to the rumors of Austrian restoration, Hitler showed amazing composure. He was undoubtedly still committed to an evolutionary policy toward Austria -- at least for the time being.

The situation in Vienna was progressing quite nicely for Germany. In mid-December, Ambassador Papen was invited to discuss with Schuschnigg the Anschluss question and to build upon the Gentlemen's Agreement. Papen urged the Federal Chancellor to do his utmost to placate Hitler, who was preparing to act in events "of the greatest historical significance."[48] Rather than implicitly following German foreign policy by not doing anything opposed to it, the Ambassador argued that a more active role was needed from Austria to convince Hitler that the Agreement was being honored. Hitler could very well accuse Austria of violating the July Treaty unless she took an explicitly active

role in playing Germany's partner. While we have seen that Hitler did not intend to move against Austria, it was certainly a good bluff; the German Ambassador was probably very sincere in his warnings. Papen -- the moderate -- did not want to see violence result from this issue; he was interested in pulling Schuschnigg into Hitler's orbit rather than trip him up in order to be massacred.

Combined with Papen's pressure on Schuschnigg was an increase in visibility from the Austrian NSDAP. By December, 1937, the party was increasing in its own standing. The SA had grown to 35,000 members, while the SS was being supported by Keppler and Himmler. The Austrian police was intimidated by both organizations; the SA was large enough to be dangerous, while the SS was regarded as the best organized section of the entire party.[49] Papen reported that volkish movements were generally "making excellent progress" and that Nazi meetings were attracting more members daily.[50] Moreover, Austrian authorities now permitted public collections of money for the Nazi Hilfwerk organization, which then supplemented "the funds supplied by the Reich".[51] Yet as 1937 drew to a close, most of the members of the national oppostion, led by Seyss and Glaise-Horstenau, were in agreement that the only way to further the move toward Anschluss was to subject Schuschnigg to "the strongest possible pressure."[52]

As 1938 began, the political situation in Austria was extraordinarily delicate. The NSDAP was fragmented by Leopold's constant bickering with Seyss, Keppler, and Papen; and yet the police, and Schuschnigg, feared the Party more than any other

organization in Austria. The SA and SS could not be wished away, and the growth of Nazi sympathizers could not be denied. Naturally, the threat from the north was of great concern as well. Germany was supplying the NSDAP with money, advice, and (in the case of Keppler) with leaders. Schuschnigg could not ignore the party nor the Germans for fear of stimulating accusations of treaty-breaking from Hitler, and thereby incurring the military wrath of the Reich. Schuschnigg was not happy with his position for good reason. He was running out of breathing room.

The Success of the Austrian Party

While Schuschnigg was busy feeling pressure from Germany and the Austrian party, he successfully kept his wits about him. In early January a frustrated Seyss-Inquart requested permission from the German Foreign Ministry to resign his post as State Councillor in the Austria cabinet. Seyss felt that his actions in the government had not been beneficial to the cause and that Schuschnigg had been most forceful in refusing his suggestions.[53] While he was denied this request (to lose Seyss would be to lose Glaise-Horstenau as well, who would undoubtedly join him in a defection; Germany would then have NO agents in Austria), the simple fact that it was made at all shows how depressed Seyss was with the proceedings. The Federal Chancellor was certainly holding his ground.

The next four weeks, however, shook Schuschnigg at his foundations, pushing him into Hitler's clutches. The avalanche

began, mildly enough, with the discovery on January 8 of over 10,000 postcards and pamphlets stamped as being 1938 German propaganda material. The evidence, found in the car of the Mayor of Passau, pointed directly to the German Foreign Ministry as being in violation of the Gentlemen's Agreement. State secretary Schmidt, astounded by the voluminous pile of anti-Austrian materials, declared that it was the "crassest case so far of interference in Austrian domestic affairs."[54] Obviously, the German government was not letting up in its efforts of destroying Austrian autonomy.

The real blows, however, came at the end of the month. On January 20, Schuschnigg was confronted with reports stating that Leopold, the frustated Altkampfer, was planning a coup for the spring. Both the German government and portions of the Austrian Army were to join in the revolt against the Republic unless Nazi demands for an Anschluss were met.[55] Later in the day Schuschnigg was told that reliable sources knew of German plans to invade Austria in the spring. Schuschnigg, unless he chose to support the invasion, would "share the fate of the late Chancellor Dollfuss."[56] Whether or not these two reports had any grain of truth to them is basically irrelevant. The importance of these rumors lies in that they greatly increased the tension within the government, and only heightened Schuschnigg's anxiety concerning the future of his country.

The straw that broke the Camel's back came crashing down upon Schuschnigg on January 25, 1938. Austrian authorities raided Nazi Headquarters in Vienna and confiscated what amounted to enough evidence to implicate the entire party in an act of

overt treason. The Viennese Headquarters, as well as the home of Gauleiter Tavs, was found to be the holding area for documents planning a violent coup against the Austrian government. Progress toward achieving an Anschluss under the Schuschnigg reign was deemed impossible; therefore the Nazis would scheme to agitate to such an extent that retaliation and suppression by the Austrian government would be the only feasible solution. After this had happened, Hitler would be so furious with Schuschnigg that an armed invasion would not only be imminent, but would be justifiable on the grounds that the July Agreement had been betrayed. After a brief period of German occupation, Captain Leopold would take control of Austria and form his own government.[57]

This was the final signal for Schuschnigg. Ambassador Papen, no doubt perlexed by this completely unevolutionary attempt for Anschluss, reported that the confiscation "made the Federal Chancellor conscious of the impossibility of letting the present state of affairs continue."[58] The time had come to do something about the internal strife. The pressure was becoming too much. While they were certainly not the most powerful organization in the world, the Austrian Nazis had the enthusiasm and the backing of the German government: two very powerful assets. The Chancellor was ready to talk.

Schuschnigg had planned to meet with Hitler at the end of the month of January anyway, and he seemed to have something concrete to say. This original meeting had been suggested late in 1937 due to increased party pressure. Chancellor Schuschnigg recalled that,

> Toward the end of 1937 the Nazi underground terror was again in full swing. Telephone booths exploded, tear gas bombs were thrown, and mass demonstrations were arranged in order to induce the Austrian police to intervene. Once the police dispersed the crowds, Berlin protested that we did not keep our share of the bargain and allowed the persecution of National Socialism.
>
> At this point it seemed to me necessary to get into personal contact with one of the leading men in Germany, as I hoped to strengthen the 1936 agreement through personal intervention.[59]

But a meeting was denied Schuschnigg by German officials. Only in early January was Schuschnigg able to secure a meeting with Hitler; but now this conference, scheduled for the last days of January, was cancelled due to problems in Germany (Hitler was busy expelling Generals Blomberg and Fritsch from his military staff).[60] In the past, a cancelled meeting would not have caused any great alarm: meetings can normally be re-scheduled. But the situation in Austria was simply too volatile for Schuschnigg to stay calm. The meeting that he so desperately needed was now unavailable to him.

In frustration, Schuschnigg met with Seyss-Inquart and Glaise-Horstenau during the first days of February to discuss some kind of solution to the internal problems facing Austria. The Federal Chancellor agreed to release all the political prisoners still held in Austrian prisons, develop "military, economic, and political relations with the Reich through the inclusion of persons from the ranks of the National Opposition", and give Seyss control over numerous government committees.[61] On top of the concessions, Schuschnigg asked Seyss-Inquart to accept a ministerial post in the cabinet, upgrading his prestige from that of State Councillor.[62] Much to Schuschnigg's dismay, Seyss

chose to refrain from giving a reply: he had been advised by Papen not to commit himself yet.

Papen, however, suddenly found himself in a precarious position for perhaps the first time since his close call with death during the Rohm Putsch in 1934. On February 4, Papen was mysteriously informed that he was being relieved of his position as Ambassador to Austria: he was being included in Hitler's purge to remove non-Nazis from all German government posts. This was not a promising sign for Schuschnigg, either, who interpreted Papen's dismissal as a final rejection of Germany's moderate and relatively peaceful policy toward Austria.

But Papen was a survivor: he had escaped with his life in 1934, and he would eventually elude the hangman during the War Crimes trials. On the 5th, the ex-Ambassador paid a visit to Hitler to give his final report to the Fuehrer. In order to save his own job, Papen reminded Hitler that Schuschnigg was very interested in discussing the Austrian situation with the German dictator, and that he, Papen had the ability to bring about a discussion.[63] Hitler, recognizing an opportunity to exploit the turmoil in Austria, quickly agreed with Papen that a meeting would be most enlightening. He had cancelled the earlier meeting due to internal strife. But now that he had cleansed his hierarchy of its non-Nazi members, Hitler could turn to other, more pressing matters. Schuschnigg's recent concessions to Seyss-Inquart clearly illustrated the Chancellor's conciliatory attitude toward the national opposition: the time was right for a meeting, and Hitler dispatched Papen to return immediately to Vienna to arrange a meeting between the Austrian and German

leaders. Papen had kept his job, Schuschnigg could speak with Hitler, and Hitler could now begin to push Schuschnigg into a corner. Papen reappeared in Vienna on February 7 to inform Schuschnigg of Hitler's desire to meet with the Austrian. During that evening Schuschnigg notified Schmidt that he would accept the invitation and go to Berchtesgaden to see the Fuehrer on February 12.[64]

The Federal Chancellor was trapped. Since the ground-breaking Gentlemen's Agreement, momentum had swung decidedly over to the side of the pro-Anschluss forces. The Austrian Nazis and their German supporters had been effectively silenced after the failed Putsch in 1934; but now Schuschnigg found himself in a position where Nazi caution had been replaced by Nazi scheming and meddling. Germany was obviously supplying moral, financial, and material support to the Austrian Party. The Party was responding by applying more pressure on the government than it had since the summer of '34. Schuschnigg was justifiably concerned for the well-being of his country (as well as for his own safety); Putsch and assassination rumors whistled through Vienna in early 1938, and evidence had been found linking the ever increasingly powerful Germany with them. Now that Mussolini seemed to be leaning toward Germany in order to keep his commitment to Franco in Spain, Austria was alone in Central Europe. Seeing the threat from within his own country as a real danger, Schuschnigg had no choice but to approach Hitler in an attempt to settle the turmoil in Austria. If he allowed the situation to continue unchecked, one of the vicious rumors he had

heard might very well be enacted. While it was true that the nationalist forces were divided among themselves as to the ways in which an Anschluss should be pursued and as to the degree of independence Austria should have after the union had been completed (most Nazi leaders agreed that some sort of autonomy had to be kept), there was no denying that there was a great deal of unity in the conviction that an Austro-German union was needed. Whether it was accomplished through an evolutionary or revolutionary process almost did not matter, as long as it was accomplished. If Leopold succeeded in overthrowing the Austrian government, very few of his Nazi rivals would condemn him or his newly formed administration: he would have achieved that for which they were all striving. Schuschnigg was forced to counteract the pressure from the Nazis in the only way possible; he had to meet with Adolf Hitler.

The third stage in the Anschluss story was one characterized by a gradual increase of pressure and tension, initiated by the July Agreement. With that treaty came legitimacy for the NSDAP and an opening for oppositionist sentiments to be aired in an official setting. Germany was given an opportunity to infiltrate the Austrian countryside with the lifting of the tourist ban, and had the freedom to advise the now-legal Nazi party. The NSDAP in Austria, although splintered, remained a source of concern for the Austrian government, and by the end of 1937 was considered to be the most dangerous element in the country. The Party proved this conviction to be true in January 1938, when its ominous plans for revolution were confiscated by Austrian authorities. Without this shove from behind by the Party, it is doubtful that

Schuschnigg would have been so anxious to re-schedule the postponed meeting with Hitler as early as February 12. While he most certainly would have kept in touch with the German government, he would not have pushed for a meeting with Hitler, nor would he have been so willing, as we will soon see, to comply with the Fuehrer's demands. Schuschnigg was forced into a position of conciliation by the threat from the Austrian National Socialist party.

NOTES

1. Pauley; Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis; pg. 169
2. Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, vol. I, n. 164
3. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 152, Clause IX
4. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 160
5. Pauley, pg. 169
6. Gehl; Austria, Germany and the Anschluss; footnote 3, pg. 147
7. Ibid, pg. 147
8. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 152
9. See Weinberg, Gerhard; The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany; Starting World War II, 1937-1939; all of Chapter five.
10. Quoted from Pauley, pg. 170; see Schuschnigg, Kurt; Brutal Takeover, pg. 153
11. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 164
12. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 167
13. International Military Tribunal, vol. II, pg. 388
14. Gehl, pg. 138
15. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 177
16. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 174
17. Pauley, pg. 176
18. Ibid, pg. 176
19. Ibid, pg. 177
20. Ibid, pg. 177
21. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 165
22. Pauley, pg. 177
23. Leopold, John A.; "Seyss-Inquart and the Austrian Anschluss"; The Historian; February, 1968; vol. XXX; pg. 201-202

24. IMT; vol. II, pg. 376
25. IMT; vol. V, pg. 336
26. Carsten; Fascist Movements in Austria; pg. 305
27. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 223
28. Gehl, pg. 153
29. Pauley, pg. 186
30. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 229
31. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 232
32. Pauley, pg. 186
33. Gehl, pg. 145
34. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 240
35. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 241
36. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 242
37. Pauley, pg. 185
38. Gehl, pg. 158
39. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 248, 249
40. Gehl, pg. 156
41. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 256
42. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 256
43. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 263
44. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 19
45. See Weinberg; The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany, 1937-1939, pg. 35-38; and Taylor, A.J.P.; The Origins of the Second World War, pg. 129-131
46. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 19
47. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 19
48. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 273
49. Pauley, pg. 190
50. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 273
51. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 273
52. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 273
53. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 276
54. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 275
55. Brook-Shepherd; Anschluss; pg. 14: DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 283
56. Brook-Shepherd, pg. 15
57. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 279
58. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 279
59. Schuschnigg, Kurt; Austrian Requiem, pg. 9
60. Gehl, pg. 168
61. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 282
62. Gehl, pg. 170
63. Taylor, pg. 138-139
64. Gehl, pg. 170

7

STAGE FOUR

The final stage of action in the Anschluss story began with Schuschnigg's acceptance of the German invitation to discuss the strained relations between Germany and Austria. With this decision came the ultimate downfall of the government. A host of events rocked the Schuschnigg cabinet in rapid succession, the last of which was the final realization of Anschluss sentiment. The Federal Chancellor's final undoing amounted to his seeming "willingness to make small concessions"[1] to his opponents at every opportunity. Hitler and his Austrian supporters recognized this trait and fully exploited it in an effort to push Schuschnigg into a corner. They succeeded. After trying unsuccessfully to cope with Nazism diplomatically, using short term "appeasement" concessions, Schuschnigg reacted to the Austrian pressure by unwisely calling for a nationwide plebiscite to undermine Nazi claims of large popular support.

The Austrian NSDAP, on the other hand, benefitted greatly during this fourth stage. Nazi ranks swelled to amazing proportions, as hundreds of thousands of erstwhile spectators jumped onto the party bandwagon as momentum shifted over to the pro-Anschluss supporters. Indeed, as this sudden outpouring of Nazi support grew in volume, ". . . it was frequently Austrians who were forcing the pace of events with the Germans reacting to them."[2] With highly vocal demonstrations, the NSDAP clearly illustrated its power and popularity to the frightened Schuschnigg, who could not help but see his support draining away

from him.

In the end, of course, it was Hitler's disgust with Schuschnigg's plebiscite attempt which sparked the final achievement of Anschluss. With timely telephone calls and written instructions to Austrian Party leaders, Hitler (and Goehring) were successful in completing the union between the two states. Yet it is imperative to note that without the inner turmoil and skyrocketing support for the National Socialist party within Austria, Hitler's attempt for Anschluss in the middle of March would have ended in total disaster.

Berchtesgaden

Schuschnigg's February 7th decision to accept the invitation to meet with Hitler was coupled with a move to negotiate with Seyss-Inquart. Schuschnigg wished to arrive at Berchtesgaden with an argeement with the opposition in hand, to be used as a sort of "fait accompli" against the German dictator. If Schuschnigg could approach the Fuehrer with a list of proposals, he would have the ability to mold the discussion to his liking, rather than to Hitler's. By already securing certain agreements, Schuschnigg could say to his German counterpart; "See what I have done!! Now you stand by your part of the July Agreement and stay out of Austrian affairs!" In order to do this Schuschnigg quickly began negotiations with Seyss-Inquart, who, as leader of the opposition, was in position to officially accept any terms deemed satisfactory to the opposition cause.

These negotiations only proved to give the Anschluss

fighters an even more solid ground on which to stand. The Schuschnigg government, represented by Guido Zernatto (the Secretary of the the Fatherland Front), made a number of sweeping concessions to Seyss in an attempt to pacify Hitler at their later meeting. Among the ten points conceded by the government was the major idea that the Austrian Nazi party (rather than the nebulous national oppostion) would become a significant part of the Austrian government.[3] This naturally came as pleasant news to the weary Seyss. He quickly informed Hitler of the points of the negotiations, and correctly interpreted them as the farthest Schuschnigg was willing to go in the direction of conciliation. Before meeting with Hitler in February, therefore, Schuschnigg had already conceded a complete Gleichschaltung.[4]

Much to the Federal Chancellor's chagrin, news of his negotiations with Seyss-Inquart reached the ears of radical Nazi leader Josef Leopold. As an opponent of both the Austrian government and Seyss-Inquart, Leopold immediately planned large demonstrations against the proceedings. As Keppler reported to the German Foreign Ministry,

> Consequently, 400 men were arrested 2 days ago and nearly 400 members of the "Hitlerjugend" were expelled from school. The "Hitlerjugend", evidently in accordance with Leopold's wishes, also began rioting[5]

The first of the major February demonstrations only irritated the moderates and the G.F.M. With Schuschnigg on his way to see Hitler, the last thing the Germans wanted was an angry Austrian leader. Hitler wanted to do the bullying; he did not want Schuschnigg to take control.

As Schuschnigg entered Berchtesgaden, he was unaware that

Hitler already knew of his concessions with Seyss. In fact, those agreements had been somewhat of a guide in forming Hitler's own tact in the proceedings. While Schuschnigg looked upon them as his maximum offerings, Hitler saw the Seyss Agreement as his own minimum demands. Therefore, Hitler could only gain from the talks. Anything else that could be squeezed out of the Austrian Chancellor would be considered a victory.

The meeting was more of a monologue than a dialogue. Hitler opened the morning session by berating Schuschnigg over the latter's apparent refusal to stick to the July Agreement of 1936. Schuschnigg did little to defend himself, except to remind Hitler that National Socialism was entirely responsible for the death of Chancellor Dollfuss, and was therefore an unappreciated part of the Austrian political community. Hitler could do nothing but agree.[6] No decisions were made, however, until after a lunch break had been taken.[7] Then the storm hit. Hitler was basically asking for the same Agreement Schuschnigg had made with Seyss, but with a few added proposals. Hitler demanded amnesty for all Nazi prisoners (including Dollfuss' assassins, who were still in prison, and the numerous Nazis held in conjunction with the Leopold/Tavs plots) and promotions for Glaise-Horstenau (from Minister without Portfolio to Minister of Defense) and Seyss-Inquart (to Minister of the Interior).[8] But Schuschnigg courageously refused to buckle under Hitler's verbal barrage, trying to bring about some kind of compensation in return for these concessions. He did not want to give something for nothing, which he knew would destroy any faith his followers might have in him back home. He was determined not to return to

Vienna empty-handed. As a result, neither man would budge.

As the day progressed, Hitler became further agitated with the Austrian Chancellor. The old ways of cowing his opponents merely with rhetorical statements and grandiose accusations were not working in Schuschnigg's case. By late afternoon, the Fuehrer looked to a different means of pressure. As Schuschnigg hedged on a commitment to adhere to Hitler's demands, the Fuehrer flipped his ace onto the table and completely rearranged the entire tone of the meeting. Earlier that morning Generals Keitel, Sperrle, and von Reichen had been summoned to Berchtesgaden to be present during the discussions. The three military men had no idea why they were chosen to greet the Austrian delegation, but Hitler's motive soon became clear. At roughly 5:00 p.m., Hitler testily shouted for General Keitel, gruffly dismissed Schuschnigg with the wave of his hand,[9] and led his general into his office. Papen, who had traveled to Berchtesgaden in front of Schuschnigg, grew panicky and pleaded for an audience with Hitler with anyone who would listen.[10] The presence of the powerful Wehrmacht was naturally disheartening for the Austrian Chancellor, but was quickly intensified as Hitler stomped into his quarters with one of his top commanders.

Inside the office, however, Hitler invited Keitel to sit, and simply said, "Nothing at all".[11] No military plans or actions were discussed; in fact, Hitler waited a full 45 minutes before again seeing the shaken Schuschnigg. Hitler's bluff quickly paid dividends, as Schuschnigg agreed to the demands made by Hitler without asking for anything in return, and promised to

follow a three-day timetable to get the Protocol approved by Schuschnigg's figure-head partner, President Miklas. In order to insure this ratification, Hitler deviously ordered Keitel and the General staff to "spread false but quite credible news which may lead to the conclusion of military preparations against Austria."[12] Troop movements were reported on the Austro-German border, and rumors were spread that police and customs officials were calling up reinforcements.[13] As Schuschnigg traveled back to Austria, he was unsure whether or not his Agreement had saved Austria from German invasion. The German military intimidation was completely successful: Miklas quickly verified the legitimacy of the Protocol, thus saving Austria from a war which Hitler did not intend to fight.

Upon returning to Austria, Schuschnigg was faced with the consequences of his concessions. Hitler's military parade had done much to unnerve the Chancellor, and the rumors of German mobilization did little to ease his fears. Seyss-Inquart was quickly appointed Minister of the Interior (on February 15), and Glaise-Horstenau received the post of Minister of Defense: Schuschnigg did not wish to invite the wrath of Hitler by going back on his word, regardless of the fact that he had given it while under duress.[14] But the promotion of the two oppositionists to higher positions in the cabinet was the least of Schuschnigg's problems.

The Federal Chancellor had, again, given in to Hitler without receiving any kind of suitable concession in return. Schuschnigg gave the impression that,

> . . . he had made the concessions only under pressure. It was natural for Austrian and German Nazis to assume that more coercion would net still more gains. The Chancellor had also set a disasterous precedent by allowing the leader of a foreign country to dictate his selection of ministers.[15]

The German Legation reported that Schuschnigg was quickly losing the support of both Catholics and Jews due to his conciliatory approach to the anti-semitic and anti-clerical German leader. Furthermore, the Gleichschaltung achieved by both Seyss and Hitler was viewed as a mutual agreement by both Great Britain and France; now neither one would be in a position to move in the defense of Austria if an outright Anschluss had appeared to conform to the Protocol; therefore, neither Western Power could come to the "aid" of a country that was not requesting it. Also important in this sphere was the refusal of Mussolini to speak up as Austria's protector. The Stressa Front which looked so formidable in 1934-35 was now completely obsolete with Mussolini's defection to Germany.[17] Schuschnigg had few allies left in Europe.

The Berchtesgaden Agreement was initially frowned upon by the Austrian Party. Again, they had been excluded from the talks, while they were the main issue being discussed. It seemed like a repeat of the July Agreement.[18] Seyss was seen as a traitor who was now working with the Schuschnigg government, and now shared the contempt of Leopold and the other radical elements in the Party. Tavs went so far as to order his Viennese followers to break every window in the German Legation (an order which was never carried out).[19] But the Protocol did lift the party up to the status of legitimacy, and allowed it the

opportunity to legally express its political beliefs without fear of persecution.[20] Indeed, the Austrian party exploited this new-found freedom for all it was worth during the short weeks between Berchtesgaden and the Anschluss.

The Interim Period -- February 15 to March 9

While moderate Nazis were jubilant over the success of the Protocol, the radical strand of the party was indignant. During the weeks following Miklas' approval of the Agreement, the more active party members took advantage of their sudden legal standing and demonstrated to Austria, and the world, the growing popularity of National Socialism. The real hotbeds of support were located in Styria and, in particular, Graz, where an estimated 80% of the population was pro-Nazi.[21] Here, the National Socialist Soldiers' Ring operated to further the Anschluss cause. The group, made up of soldiers, ex-servicemen, and police, "comprised about a quarter of the garrison and the police"[22] in Graz. On February 19, civilians marched to show their support for Anschluss without facing any police intervention. Huge Nazi demonstrations closed both the University and the Technical Institute in Graz.[23] 8,000 people joined in a torch-lit parade through the city. SA men were organizing and marching throughout Styria with complete immunity. The following two days saw demonstrations in over 30 Styrian towns with crowds ranging from 70 to 10,000 people. Policemen, soldiers, and members of the Fatherland Front occassionally participated in the rallies to add an air of muscle and unity to the proceedings.[24]

Hitler, meanwhile, was not inactive at this junction either. On February 20 the Fuehrer spoke at the Reichstag not only to his German subjects but to audiences in Czechoslovakia and (for the first time) Austria. All of Schuschnigg's hopes for a peaceful relationship with Germany were shattered during Hitler's three hour speech. Rather than ensuring Austria's independence, Hitler made note of the "ten million Germans" living outside the Reich who were "suffering because of their sympathy and solidarity with the whole German race and its ideology."[25] As Gordon Brook-Shepherd astutely notes,

> The ten millions were the people of Austria added to the Sudeten minority of Czechoslovakia, and when Hitler announced in the same hoarse breath that he would not allow them to be deprived of the 'right of racial self-determination', everyone in Prague and Vienna knew what he meant.[26]

The Fuehrer obviously knew what he was doing. He was cognizant of his swelling popularity in Austria, and was well aware of what the reaction to his speech would entail. The party was expanding every day now. Hitler's demand for German autonomy only sparked an already accelerating movement to grow even larger, and he knew only too well that his speech was, in part, responsible for it.

This confidence in both himself and the strength of the party was clearly exhibited on February 21, the day after his Reichstag speech. Leopold and Major Klausner had been summoned to Berlin the day before, and now individually met with Hitler. The Captain's continual feuding with just about everyone imaginable had finally proven to be too much for the Fuehrer. Based on advice from both Keppler and Goehring; Leopold was officially relieved of his "command" by Hitler, and was replaced

by the more moderate (and malleable) Klausner. Leopold was to remain in Germany serving functions unattached to Austrian politics, which would, in turn, remove his troublesome ego from the Austrian confrontation.[27]

This kind of action in the past would have splintered the party. But nary a complaint was heard in Austria. This clearly shows two major developments in the history of the Austrian Nazi party. First of all, Leopold did not have a broad enough base of support in his own country to merit any kind of large outpouring of sentiment to protest his dismissal. Secondly, the enthusiasm and momentum brought on by Berchtesgaden and Hitler's speech completely overshadowed the change in leadership. Quite frankly, at this point the party had little need for a visible Austrian leader. It was a runaway freight train which was building speed as it raced through Austrian cities, towns, and villages. Astonishing amounts of workers were joining or marching for the NSDAP in areas previously assumed to be Communist.[28] Swastikas and the Hitler salute were everywhere. Demonstrations popped up across the country.[29] The party was rolling along at an amazing pace. Nothing could have controlled it and certainly nothing could have stopped it: but Schuschnigg decided to try anyway.

On February 24, the Federal Chancellor addressed his fellow countrymen on the state of Austrian affairs. The speech itself was completely overshadowed by the response from the Austrian Nazis. In Graz, Nazis infiltrated a crowd of roughly 20,000 which had formed to listen to the speech over the radio. The National Socialists adeptly turned them against Schuschnigg to

such an extent that the Loudspeakers used to carry the speech were rendered unusable and a Swastika flag was raised over the Town Hall with the Mayor's approval.[30] In other areas, pro-Nazi crowds outnumbered pro-government crowds nearly four to one.[31] The Anschluss fervor continued to mount throughout the last week of February and the first week of March. As Bruce Pauley remarks,

> . . . it seemed to be only a question of time until the Schuschnigg regime lost control of the situation and collapsed.[32]

The grass-roots movement had finally taken hold in Austria. Countless numbers flocked to the party. Momentum had swung completely over to the National Socialists. Schuschnigg had shown that he could only satisfy the NSDAP for short periods of time; then they would become mischievous again and require more pacification. The Austrian people, and Schuschnigg, finally saw that the only way to completely satisfy Nazi desires was to accept an Anschluss. As more Austrians began to realize this, they quickly hopped aboard "the train" as it rumbled through their hometown. No one wanted to be left out when the eventual Anschluss occurred.

Schuschnigg could see the huge shift of momentum swinging away from him and into the hands of the National Socialists. Indeed, he would have been blind not to. In the aftermath of his uninspiring speech on the 24th, the Chancellor made his last move to prevent the mounting Nazi tidal wave from crashing down upon him. Out of seeming desperation, Schuschnigg secretly informed Zernatto of his decision to appeal to the Austrian people and ask for their approval of the Schuschnigg administration. In order

to form a broad base of support, the Chancellor moved to negotiate with the Socialist leaders he had spurned since his tenure as Austrian leader had begun. But now, in the face of open revolt, Schuschnigg had no choice but to obtain support from the leftist wing of Austrian society. Negotiations had started immediately after the Berchtesgaden meeting, but now increased in intensity in March as the Nazi crusade continued to gain strength.[33]

Schuschnigg also contacted Benito Mussolini in an attempt to gain Il Duce's support. Schuschnigg should have known better. The Italian leader advised against a plebiscite, arguing that it would only serve to antagonize Hitler.[34] Schuschnigg, to be fair, must not have been counting very heavily on Mussolini's reply: he ignored it completely, and chose to carry on without Italian support. He had no other choice, really. To let the situation continue unchecked would surely lead to Civil War. With sections of the police and Armed Forces involved with the Nazis, no authoritative muscle could be depended upon to squelch the NSDAP. Because of its legal status, the party could do as it pleased, with Hitler seemingly ready to move in an instant if the Protocol or July Agreement were broken. Something had to be done. The plebiscite was the only way to stem the tide. Besides, if Schuschnigg should come away with a victory, he would be able to quiet Nazi cries of fulfilling Wilsonian self-determination policies. The plebiscite could at least slow the process down. Or so it seemed.

The Anschluss

The wording of the Plebiscite, set for March 13, was brilliantly ambiguous. Few could have argued against all of it, while most (including the more moderate National Socialists) could agree with at least some of it. Schuschnigg was careful to include everyone in the statement, save for the Monarchists, the Communists, and the Jews, all of whom would undoubtedly vote for it anyway. The question asked,

> Are you in favor of a free and German, an independent and social, a Christian and united Austria?[35]

To be sure, the nebulous question catered to a vast number of Austrians: patriots, pan-Germans, Socialists, Christians, and workers. Even the National Socialists wanted to retain some autonomy from the Reich after the Anschluss had occurred.[36] While all that was asked of Austrian citizens was a simple "Yes" or "No" answer, a number of tactics were implemented to give an unfair advantage to Schuschnigg's pro-government forces. The voting age had been moved from 20 to 24 in order to exclude the large Nazi youth following.[37] Only ballots with a "Yes" vote were printed: if one wished to vote "No" he or she had to bring along their own slip of paper, which thus destroyed the private ballot. Moreover, the registration procedures allowed for multiple voting, and ballot-box stuffing. Due to these tactics, Schuschnigg justifiably expected support from 65% to 70% of his countrymen.[38]

While Schuschnigg had hoped to keep his plebiscite a secret from Hitler until the last possible moment, his plans were dashed by a spy conveniently located in Zernatto's office. Globocnik

immediately flew to Berlin to inform the Fuehrer; by the evening of March 8, Hitler was in a rage over the underhanded attempt by Schuschnigg to force the issue. The date of the plebiscite, barely five days away, did not allow the National Socialists time for maneuvering. The Nazi propaganda machine would not have enough time to get rolling, and Schuschnigg's success seemed imminent. Hitler now faced a difficult decision. The evolutionary process espoused by Germany up to this day had not taken them far enough. He now had to act decisively or be humiliated.[39]

Hitler acted instinctively. Globocnik was sent back to Austria with a letter for Seyss-Inquart demanding postponement of the plebiscite from Schuschnigg. Also with Globocnik went instructions for Klausner and the rest of the Nazi party; they were now given freedom of action, and permission to protest the Austrian government without restraint. Finally, General Keitel was ordered to make immediate plans for an invasion. This, unlike Berchtesgaden, was no bluff. If Schuschnigg chose not to agree with Seyss' demand for postponement, the Wehrmacht would march.[40]

On March 9, Seyss-Inquart wrote to Schuschnigg asking him to allow Hitler to be involved in plebiscite discussions.[41] But the Chancellor, knowing full-well the danger in letting the Dictator infringe on this affair, refused. Seyss was quickly informed to break off all negotiations with Schuschnigg and to intensify the protests made against the plebiscite.[42]

The party, meanwhile, was quickly mobilized by Rainer and

Globocnik, the two young Nazis who had given Leopold a slight battle for the party leadership in the summer of 1936 (it is interesting to note that they remained in Austria and took an active role in the Anschluss, while Leopold sat exiled in Germany). By March 10,

> . . . all the preparations for future revolutionary actions already had been made. . . and the necessary orders given to all unit leaders.[43]

SA and SS squadrons were alerted, and braced themselves for the battle that would surely ensue. Indeed, the entire party was ready for action.

Back in Germany, military plans were hastily drawn up by the General Staff. If Schuschnigg chose to deny all diplomatic efforts from Germany, violent invasion would result.[44] Hitler had his excuse: he claimed that the plebiscite was in violation of the Berchtesgaden Protocol by trying to deny National Socialists access to the government. If he really needed to, Hitler would attack his own homeland.

The situation on March 11, 1938, therefore, was quite complex. Schuschnigg still had control of the government and clung to his plebiscite idea. The Austrian Nazis were congregating in their various areas in preparation for come-what-may. Seyss-Inquart was now the main link between Berlin, Vienna, and the party. His cabinet cohort, Edmund Glaise-Hosrtenau, was flying into Vienna from Berlin, where he had had a brief audience with Hitler and had been given a letter for Seyss. The German military, meanwhile, was gearing up for action along its southern border, as the diplomatic forces continued to scheme and plan for the postponement of the plebiscite. Few would have guessed that

by the end of the day a complete shift in the Austrian government would take place.

The day began with Seyss-Inquart meeting Glaise-Horstenau as he landed in Vienna. The new Minister of Defense delivered a letter to Seyss from Hitler, which the two men read as they drove through the streets of Vienna on their way to work. The letter demanded a four week postponement of the plebiscite, and gave 12:00 noon as the deadline for this decision to be made. If Schuschnigg were to refuse Seyss again, as he had done earlier, then, "A military action was to be understood without any possible confusion."[45] Knowing Hitler's serious attitude toward the problem, the two oppositionists went immediately to Schuschnigg to convey their Fuehrer's sentiments. Due to complications, however, Glaise-Horstenau and Seyss were not able to completely inform Schuschnigg of the total picture until 11:30 a.m., making the noon deadline implausible. Regardless of the time limit, the Chancellor was at first adamant in his refusal to acquiesce to the Nazi demands. But Seyss made his position very clear. The Wehrmacht would march, and would be joined by the now impressive Austrian NSDAP forces. Schuschnigg had little choice. By late afternoon, the Federal Chancellor privately agreed to cancel his plebiscite and resign his post as Chancellor.[46]

As soon as this news reached Berlin, Hermann Goehring stepped in to take control of the situation (he would later claim full responsibility -- or credit -- for the actual transferral of power during the Anschluss).[47] Goehring made a series of now infamous telephone calls to various personalities in Vienna,

giving orders and ultimatums to Seyss and the German legation. After being erroneously informed of a complete Nazi takeover at approximately 5:00 p.m., Goehring informed the Legation that he had decided upon a list of Austrians deemed satisfactory to make up a new cabinet. Seyss was to be appointed Chancellor (by President Miklas, who still held office), while Glaise-Horstenau and Kaltenbrunner (of the SS) would hold important ministerial positions.[48] Miklas, however, was not cooperating. The old president was not as willing as Schuschnigg to relinquish Austria's freedom, and he refused to agree to appoint Seyss and the opposition cabinet. This only served to infuriate Goehring, who now telephoned Seyss-Inquart at 5:30 p.m. A new ultimatum was issued, to be delivered to the President by German Military Attache Muff. If by 7:30 p.m. a new government had not been formed, German troops would invade Austria at 8:00 p.m. that evening.[49] Goehring contemptuously spat that, "If Miklas could not understand it in 4 hours, we shall make him understand it now in 4 minutes."[50] But the President held his ground. Both Muff and Keppler, who had arrived from Berlin that afternoon with Hitler's demands for a new government, tried to persuade Miklas to avoid bloodshed and agree to the new cabinet set forth by Goehring. Hitler alone, of course, had the authority to call for the military, but he was not ready to do so at that time. Goehring's bluff had been called by Miklas.

Chancellor Schuschnigg, however, was not as bold as his president. He believed the invasion threat, and was convinced that the only thing worse than an Anschluss was a military conflict between two German peoples. Under his order,

> At 7:00 p.m. Radio Vienna was authorized to reveal the postponement of the plebiscite; a few minutes later, the resignation was announced of the entire Cabinet, with the significant exception of Seyss-Inquart. . .[52]

In publicly stepping down as Chancellor, Schuschnigg had sabotaged the courageous stand taken by Miklas. Seyss was now the only other official representative of the Austrian people, and he was in direct conflict with the President. What was more, the Plebiscite had been cancelled, saving Germany and the Austrian Nazis from the probable embarrassment of facing a pro-government vote (albeit a fixed one). The official resignation of the government now touched off action from within Austria; the party began to move.

Rainer and Globocnik, free to do as they pleased after Hitler's permission to throw caution to the wind, mobilized their Nazi forces. Upon hearing the official news that Schuschnigg and his cabinet had resigned, the two Carinthians issued orders for the Viennese SS and SA forces to enter the Chancellery and occupy it as a sign of total command. The two then called on each Gauleiter, instructing them to overthrow the existing local authorities in Austria's eight other provinces.[53] The Austrian Nazi leaders could see that the collapse of the government was imminent. Now, "only through a seizure of power could they forestall a German invasion and assume themselves the spoils of victory."[54] Rainer and Globocnik hurried to secure the country as being completely National Socialist, but also Austrian. They were too close to success, and power, to want the German Army to usurp it just when it was all within reach. Even the party regulars in the streets were, ". . . anxious to avoid the

impression that Seyss-Inquart and German pressure were alone responsible for the Austrian Chancellor's . . . demise."[55]

Sure enough, by 8:30 members of the SS Standarte Eighty-Nine (the same outfit responsible for Dollfuss' murder) were admitted into government buildings in Vienna without resistance.[56] In the surrounding Gau, according to Rainer,

> . . . the revolution broke out, and this resulted in the complete occupation of Austria within three hours and the taking over of all important posts by the party.[57]

Indeed, before German troops began filtering across the Austro-German border, the entire country was already in the hands of the Austrian party. During the night, ". . . police officers had already adopted the wearing of. . . the swastika."[58] The Army, similarly, was not even trusted by its own commanding officer.[59] Based on such evidence, one must argue that the need for German invasion was non-existent and that even without military intervention a successful putsch had occurred. The party did not need Hitler now, and did not want him now. They had succeeded in occupying the government and, with the Austrian police and Army supporting the party, had no one against whom to fight.

Yet Goehring was not convinced of the complete success of the party. He wanted to make sure that nothing was left to chance, and that Germany would annex Austria with no strings attached. At 8:48 p.m., Goehring telephoned Keppler in Vienna to get a report on the situation. Keppler informed him that the Austrian Army was completely passive and that the government was now in Nazi hands.[60] Goehring, however, was not satisfied. Keppler was instructed to write the following message, as

dictated by Goehring, and then deliver it to Seyss:

> The provisional Austrian Government which after the dismissal of the Schuschnigg Government, considers it its task to establish peace and order in Austria, sends to the German Government the urgent request, to support it in its task and to help it to prevent bloodshed. For this purpose it asks the German Government to send troops as soon as possible.[61]

Goehring initially wanted Seyss to send it back to Germany, but then changed his mind. Seyss would only have to agree to the text: then the Wehrmacht would move in.

But Seyss did not want the Army to move in. He wished to keep Austria separate from the Reich, and was afraid of a German occupation. Seyss conveyed his displeasure with the idea to Keppler, and did not give the required "yes" answer. Keppler, however, now took the bull by the horns. Rather than try to persuade Seyss to change his mind, Keppler simply called Goehring back and lied. Speaking to one of Goehring's assistants, Keppler said, "Tell the General Field Marshal that Seyss-Inquart agrees."[62] Germany now had a legitimate reason for marching into Austria: The German Legation, under Keppler's instructions, sent off the telegram dictated by Goehring with Seyss-Inquart's name; an official request had been made by the only remaining Cabinet member of a sovereign state. Germany was obliged to answer it as she saw fit; and no one could stop her from intervening.

The interesting point here, however, is that German troops had been ordered to march at 8:30 p.m., a full 90 minutes before word of Seyss' "acceptance" of Goehring's message had arrived from Keppler. In Nuremberg, Goehring recalled that,

> The order to march in had been given and had nothing to do with the telegram as such. It was immaterial whether or not he (Seyss) was in agreement.[63]

When asked if the invasion would have occurred without the telegram, Goehring replied, "Yes. Of course.".[64] Germany was obviously planning on marching, regardless of Austrian Nazi sentiments. The party's success in overthrowing the government was of little interest in Berlin. They were simply concerned with expansion, with or without the consent of the new National Socialist government.

Seyss, however, did not know that this fateful telegram had been sent. He was, of course, well aware of rumors circulating throughout Vienna that Germany had crossed the border and was entering into Austria. The Minister of the Interior now moved quickly. Miklas had finally seen that his resistance was futile, and appointed Seyss as Chancellor of Austria before 11:00 p.m. A radio announcement made the act public information at 11:15.[65] Thus, as midnight came and went, the new Chancellor rushed to secure the independence of the country he had tried for so long to subvert. After enlisting Keppler's support, Seyss tried to halt the Wehrmacht's march into Austria. General Muff, who was genuinely opposed to the German invasion, was used as the intermediary. He called Berlin and spoke with an SS Obergruppenfuehrer, asking that all invasion troops be withdrawn. The SS man, however, squelched this request, informing him that the Army had already crossed the border and was unable to be recalled. Hitler was, in fact, very pleased with these developments.[66] It was too late for anyone to stop him. The invasion was under way.

Aftermath

As the German Wehrmacht heaved its way through Austria (a reported 70% of its equippment broke down during the march),[67] an enormous outpouring of enthusiasm was showered down upon the men passing through each town and village. Citizens and Austrian military personnel flocked to greet the "invaders". General Keitel recalled that,

> . . . in every village we were received most enthusiastically and the Austrian Federal Army marched side by side with the German soldiers through the streets over which we drove.[68]

Indeed, the march through Austria was seen as "more a parade than an invasion",[70] while the Army was greeted as "a force of liberation."[70] Correspondants in Austria reported for the New York Times that,

> All over Austria excited crowds are cheering the union. . . and the cry that echoes through the swirling streets is a cry of triumph.[71]

Headlines screamed,

> VIENNESE GO WILD; JAM NOISY STREETS. Yelling, Singing, Flag Waving Throngs Surge Through City, Giving Nazi 'Sieg Heil!'[72]

These emotions were sincere, and the victory seemed to touch everyone. The Anschluss had finally come for Austria.

Seizing the opportunity to re-enter his old homeland as its conqueror, Hitler followed his invading forces on March 12. Everywhere, "in all villages and towns alike, there were huge crowds of people massed to cheer Hitler wildly."[73] Demonstrations in Vienna amassed over 500,000 citizens. Said Seyss-Inquart, "The enthusiasm was indescribable."[74] The great show of support for Hitler was almost too much for him. Indeed,

Hitler had originally intended to comply with Austrian NSDAP wishes and withdraw his troops from Austria in order to set up an Austrian Nazi government. But upon his triumphant arrival in Linz on March 13, Hitler was overcome with emotion. There, in his old hometown, with thousands cheering him wildly, the Fuehrer decided to incorporate Austria into the Reich. Hitler's old goal of Gleichschaltung had been surpassed by the call of complete annexation.[75]

Seyss-Inquart was duly ordered to prepare legislation which would legally and officially conclude the Anschluss chapter of Austro-German relations. Although Seyss was not completely enthusiastic about the idea of total annexation, he and "his" cabinet (the men had been chosen by Goehring on the phone back on the 11th) obeyed their instructions and wrote their own country out of existence. In retrospect, it is difficult to condemn them for doing so. According to Glaise-Horstenau, three major arguments convinced him that signing the Anschluss legislation was the right thing to do. First of all, Great Britain, Italy, and France could not, and would not, aid Austria. Consequently, Austria had no one to turn to for support. Secondly, Glaise-Horstenau,

> . . . entered under the impression of the overwhelming street demonstrations that were taking place. . . . This mass psychology was present and it was an unequaled popular demonstration.[76]

And finally, as Glaise-Horstenau and his fellow cabinet members received the legislation, German tanks were already rolling through the streets of Vienna. They could either bend to the pressure or be broken by it. They chose to bend.[77]

With this legislation came the formal end to the Anschluss story. The final chapter had come to a conclusion due to a number of reasons: Schuschnigg's inability to withstand German diplomatic pressure, Hitler's uncanny knack for correctly using a military bluff, and the ever-present and increasing pressure from the Austrian National Socialist party.

Indeed, it was the latter of these three factors which proved to do the most damage to the regime. While it is true that during the actual Anschluss (March 9 to 12) the party had acted only after receiving instructions from Germany, the fact that the Austrian NSDAP actually controlled both the Federal and Provincial governments throughout the state before German troops occupied the area cannot be ignored. If the Wehrmacht had not marched, then the party would still have held the governmental positions, and an effective coup would have been recognized as originating and being completed solely by the party. The "invasion" was after the fact: the takeover was basically complete by the time the ill-equipped Wehrmacht staggered into Vienna.

To press the importance of the party even farther, one must remember that Schuschnigg's two major political errors -- Berchtesgaden and his plebiscite -- were caused by the unrelenting pressure applied by the Austrian Nazi party. Secret plans and agreements had forced Schuschnigg to do anything to change the dangerous situation in Austria: hence his meeting with Hitler on February 12. The demonstrations and snow-balling support for the pro-Anschluss National Socialists which followed Berchtesgaden only increased the Federal Chancellor's

apprehensions. In a last-ditch effort to stifle the dangerously popular Nazis (and to avert possible Civil War), Schuschnigg felt a need to prove to his countrymen, to Germany, and to the rest of Europe that National Socialism was not the majority voice in Austria. Both Berchtesgaden and, even moreso, the plebiscite pushed Schuschnigg closer to defeat. Both moves were taken in direct response to the National Socialists.

Perhaps the most accurate statement supporting the idea of the success of the party was made in Nuremberg during the War Crimes Trials. In an affadivit to the court, Dr. Friedrich Rainer declared that,

> The seizure of power was the work of the party supported by the Fuehrer's threat of invasion and the legal standing of Seyss-Inquart in the government.[78]

Hitler's threat of invasion had certainly caused Schuschnigg to cancel his plebiscite and had influenced his resignation. Seyss-Inquart's presence in the cabinet after Schuschnigg's abdication had given the Germans and the Austrian Nazis a priceless access to the Austrian government. But without the presence of the indefatigable Austrian party, the plebiscite would never have been cancelled, and the entire Anschluss may never have occurred. Without the popular movement from within, Hitler had no legitimate claim to power, and Schuschnigg had no threat of Civil War to push him into his own disaster. Austria was, in the end, destroyed from within.

NOTES

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3. Brook-Shepherd; The Anschluss; pg.28
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7. Gehl; Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss; pg. 173
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12. IMT, vol. II, pg. 407
13. IMT, vol. II, pg. 407
14. Brook-Shepherd, pg. 68
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16. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 313
17. Brook-Shepherd, pg. 91
18. Pauley, pg. 198
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23. Pauley, pg. 202
24. Carsten, pg. 320
25. Brook-Shepherd, pg. 98; Quoted from Hitler's Speeches; vol. 2, pg. 1407-08
26. Ibid, pg. 98
27. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 318; Pauley, pg. 200-201
28. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 329
29. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 335
30. Brook-Shepherd, pg. 105
31. Carsten, pg. 320
32. Pauley, pg. 205
33. Brook-Shepherd, pg. 108
34. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 350
35. Brook-Shepherd, pg. 119-120
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37. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 340
38. Pauley, pg. 206
39. Ibid, pg. 207
40. Ibid, pg. 207
41. IMT, vol. II, pg. 409
42. DGFP, Series D, vol. I, n. 342
43. IMT, vol. II, pg. 409
44. IMT, vol. II, pg. 411, document C-102
45. NCA, vol. V, 3254-PS, pg. 981
46. NCA, vol. III, 812-PS, pg. 592
47. IMT, vol. IX, pg. 296
48. NCA, vol. V, 2949-PS, pg. 632; IMT, vol. IX, pg. 296-297
49. NCA, vol. III, 812-PS, pg. 595-596
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51. Brook-Shepherd, pg. 158-159
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57. NCA, vol. III, 812-PS, pg. 596
58. NCA, vol. V, 3254-PS, pg. 984
59. NCA, vol. V, 3245-PS, pg. 984
60. NCA, vol. V, 2949-PS, pg. 639
61. NCA, vol. V, 2949-PS, pg. 640
62. NCA, vol. V, 2949-PS, pg. 641
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72. New York Times, March 14, 1938
73. NCA, vol. V, 3254-PS, pg. 989
74. NCA, vol. V, 3254-PS, pg. 989
75. Taylor, pg. 145
76. IMT, vol. XVI, pg. 119
77. IMT, vol. XVI, pg. 119
78. NCA, vol. III, 812-PS, pg. 596

CONCLUSION

The Anschluss of Germany and Austria was an event that had taken decades to accomplish. As early as the 19th century, Austrians had been aware of the possibility of a union with their northern neighbors. Men like Georg Schoenerer had planted the seeds of pan-Germanism into the minds of students as early as the 1880s and '90s; seeds which would prove to flower just as the National Socialist party moved into position as the primary supporter of an Anschluss.

Indeed, the cry for union had grown monumentally with the conclusion of the First World War. Only the efforts of France at St. Germain could prohibit the two defeated states from becoming one. As Mark S. Simpson states,

> Had it not been for the immediate post-war hostility of the allies to an Austro-German union, there is every reason to believe that Anschluss would have occurred twenty years before it did.[1]

Even in the face of such adamant denial for "racial self-determination", Anschluss sentiment continued to be a large part of Austrian political life. Area plebiscites, demonstrations, and government questionnaires regularly reinforced the general belief that German-Austrians were in favor of union with Germany. Most of the political parties in Austria supported an Anschluss platform for one reason or another throughout the 1920s and into the early 1930s. The unsuccessful customs union attempt of 1931 further illustrates the desire, on both sides of the border, for some kind of union. From 1919 to 1932, one can fairly say that a great majority of German-Austrians were in favor of an Anschluss

in one form or another.

The simultaneous ascents to power by Adolf Hitler and Engelbert Dollfuss, however, served only to destroy the mass appeal of a union between Germany and Austria. While practically every Austrian political party dropped its Anschluss platform after the rise of Hitler's National Socialist regime, Chancellor Dollfuss pushed to snuff out Nazi strongholds in his own country. The Austrian NSDAP, which suddenly found itself in the position as sole representative of Anschluss sentiment, quickly responded to Dollfuss' repression with acts of terror and espionage. The government, in turn, reacted with more extensive denials of political expression. With each action came a reaction. The avalanche of action continued throughout 1933 and into 1934, finally culminating in the desparate Nazi Putsch attempt. Even in this early stage, the NSDAP had proven its ability to influence Austrian official policy and to force action from its enemies.

The failure of the putsch brought heavy reprisals down upon the party. Arrests picked up, to the tune of over 17,000 by the summer of 1936. Germany, which had given the Austrian party tacit support during the first stage, now ignored it, hoping to achieve an Anschluss diplomatically (the evolutionary approach) rather than violently (the revolutionary approach). The revolutionary tactics of 1933-34 may well have met with defeat, but the evolutionary policy of Germany certainly did not result in any great success. Only economic difficulties and Mussolini's shift towards Hitler in 1936 brought Chancellor Kurt von

Schuschnigg of Austria to the table in July 1936.

The Gentlemen's Agreement broke the stalemate that had clouded the Anschluss issue during 1935-36. Surely, all three sides initially benefitted from the talks. Austria's economy improved, the Austrian NSDAP prisoners were amnestied, and Germany secured a position in the Austrian cabinet for a person of oppositionist persuations. As a result, Germany found that she could push the Austrian government with more confidence, while the party began to rebuild its network, thanks to the amnesty of many of its members. With the inclusion of Arthur Seyss-Inquart into the government in 1937, both Germany and the party were blessed with a representative voice in official policy decisions. As 1938 opened, Germany and the party found themselves in a much better position than they had been in during 1935, but still a long way away from the desired goal of Anschluss.

The increased activity from the Austrian National Socialists during the first three months of the year completely changed the entire complexion of the situation, and unquestionably swung momentum in its own direction. The plotting and scheming of party leaders illustrated to Schuschnigg the desparation of the Nazis, and forced him to seek some kind of solution to this dangerous element in his own backyard. In agreeing to negotiate with Hitler in Berchtesgaden, however, Schuschnigg only defeated his own purpose. He had hoped to get compromises to strengthen his position and lessen the pressure being applied by the NSDAP. The Protocol, unfortunately, only made the Chancellor look overly eager to appease his opponents, and gave him the dubious

reputation of one who would make any concession if effectively threatened.

Sensing this weakness, the Austrian party quickly upgraded its propaganda drives and increased its rallies and demonstrations. The Austrian population also sensed the shift of power over to the Nazis; the party seemed to explode with new members in late February and early March, with citizens hoping to join before the actual event occurred in order to be in good standing with the party in the future. As was the case in January 1938, this sudden rise in vociferous National Socialist support shook Schuschnigg at his foundations. He could not let the present Nazi tide grow any further for fear of a Civil War. something had to be done, or else his beloved Austria would destroy itself. The Chancellor chose to call his famous plebiscite in the hopes of winning a majority decision on the basis of his nebulous question.

But again, as was the case at Berchtesgaden, this only proved to backfire in Schuschnigg's face. With Hitler finally officially unleashing the National Socialist party on the people of Austria, and Goehring directing Seyss-Inquart as to how to go about destroying the government, Schuschnigg had no chance to offer his subjects the chance to express their wishes. By 9:00 p.m., March 11, Austria was a National Socialist state. Seyss was its leader while Nazi party leaders from all over the country assumed control of their respective towns and provinces. With the entrance of the Wehrmacht during the night of March 11-12, the Anschluss was complete. The enthusiastic welcome received by

Hitler and his German troops was proof enough that Austrian support for the union was genuine. The later plebiscite held by the National Socialists brought home returns that surprised no one: 99.08% of the population was in favor of Anschluss.

It is difficult to deny the importance of the role of Hitler and the German government in the success of the Anschluss. The evolutionary policy of the mid-thirties had at least kept the party in Austria from killing itself with terrorist activities. Furthermore, Hitler's cool diplomatic skill was largely responsible for Schuschnigg's unwise concessions at Berchtesgaden. More importantly, the actual Anschluss took place on his initiative, and due to directives from other highly placed German officials. The "invasion" by German troops seemed to seal Germany's role in the Anschluss as one of the aggressor and victor.

Yet the entire Anschluss story could never have been told without the ever-present Austrian National Socialist party. The Nazis' bothersome and dangerous terror tactics during the Dollfuss years had made them a force to be reckoned with in official circles; their continued agitation during the time it was supposed to be outlawed only heightened its visibility and reputation. The party's greatest accomplishments came in 1938, when it effectively pushed Schuschnigg into the position of begging Hitler for a solution to his internal problems. Its final victory was not only in directly influencing Schuschnigg to call his plebiscite, but in completely occupying the government on the evening of March 11, before the German Army invaded Austria. Indeed, if the order to march had not been given, we

would today consider the Anschluss to be a successful putsch completed by the Austrian party from within its own borders. Only Hitler's demand for complete success prohibited the party from getting the credit that it was due.

A great number of things went into the final capitulation of Austria. Mussolini's desertion of the state, the Western Powers' inability to support Austria, and the constant, unrelenting pressure placed upon her from the greater German Reich. But one must not ignore the fact that pan-Germanism had a long history in Austria, and that pro-Anschluss thought was not only present in 1919, but was supported by a huge proportion of the German-Austrian population. Convincing people of the positive effects of a union was not very difficult: the same arguments had been around for decades, and were quite familiar. The National Socialists were successful in tapping this Anschluss sentiment from their countrymen, and finally molded a large body of them into a vocal and visible opposition party; certainly to the extent that Schuschnigg felt threatened enough to do something about it. Indeed, without this forceful political party the Anschluss would have been nothing more than simple dreams in the minds of very few. The party forced reactions to its presence, and ultimately succeeded in getting the type of reaction which gave it what it wanted: the union of Austria with the greater German Reich.

NOTES

1. Simpson, Mark S.; "The Austro-German Anschluss of 1938"; pg. 87

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